

Visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools: The perceptions of generalist teachers

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Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

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Glossary

Abstract Art- an art style.

Artist- the term used for the maker of an artwork.

Art Media- the type of materials used to create an artwork.

Artwork- the term used for a piece of art i.e. - a painting.

Charcoal- a drawing medium.

Codes- accepted ways of arranging materials into familiar forms, such as print, painting, moving image or sculpture.

Conventions- traditional or culturally accepted ways of doing things based on audience expectations. Visual arts has hundreds of conventions built up over time and widely accepted by audiences.

Materials- physical resources, equipment including technologies, and information used to make artworks. For example, paint, digital camera, pencil.

Papier Mache- a technique using paper to create a sculpture.

Practices- the application of visual arts skills and knowledge to create, represent, communication and respond.

Representation- the expression of a place, idea, image or information by some other term, symbol, diagram or image based on shared social values or one's own beliefs.

Style- the influencing context of an artwork, such as Impressionist.

Technical skills- combination of proficiencies in control, accuracy, alignment, strength, balance and coordination in an art form that develop with practice

Technique- the manner of making or skills used in making an artwork.

Three Dimensional Art- artworks that have depth as well as height and width, such as sculpture and installation.

Two Dimensional Art- artworks that exist on a flat surface, that have height and width, such as paintings and drawings.

(ACARA, 2013).

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Abstract

The perceptions generalist primary school teachers have of visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools gives insight into what visual arts experiences Tasmanian primary school students are receiving throughout primary school. The study was developed in order to explore the learning and experiences that Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers provide for their students in visual arts in the primary school classroom, and the rationale behind these. This study came about because as a high school art teacher, the researcher had noticed that a lot of students when they reached high school were disinterested in visual arts or did not believe they were any good at it. Therefore, the researcher wanted insight into what visual arts primary school teachers were teaching, how they were teaching visual arts and how confident and competent they were in their visual arts teaching. With the aim that this would help to develop an understanding of what visual arts ‘looks like’ in Tasmanian primary schools, and in so doing establish what further research may be developed to continue to improve visual arts teaching in Tasmanian primary schools.

A naturalistic, mixed methods approach was used to uncover the perceptions and opinions of Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers in regards to their visual arts teaching. The inductive analysis of both qualitative (interview/ survey) and quantitative (survey) data as well as an examination of the literature expanded on the perceptions generalist primary school teachers.

The study was of all Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers and a survey was conducted and made available to all from the Department of Education, Catholic Education and Independent Schools via email. Those who then wanted to offer their time to participant in an interview could do so. The interview participants were then purposefully selected. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data allowed for a deeper understanding of the perceptions of Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers.

The findings of this study help to understand what visual arts Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers are teaching, with the intention of helping advocacy for the importance of visual arts education.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

As a visual arts teacher I am still in the early stages of my career. My journey started six years ago, at a small high school, where I still teach today. This school is filled with vibrant children with a real willingness to learn. Each year at this school a new group of grade seven students begins their journey through high school. They arrive at my Art room with mixed emotions about their first lesson in a subject that some may not have experienced for several years of their schooling. Some of these students have already decided that their prior experiences of visual arts is already enough for them, and they may not want to continue to learn anymore about it, mostly because they believe they are no good at it. I consciously work closely with students who possess a predetermined dislike for visual arts. Through encouraging them and building up their confidence, for sometimes the better part of the year, they often begin to believe in their visual arts skills and become proud of the artworks they create.

Through discussions with other high school visual arts teachers I eventually realised that we are all encountering similar problems; our new students seem to have already decided their attitude towards visual arts, often before even being taught by a specialist visual arts teacher. They are usually not aware that visual arts is about using their imagination and being creative, rather than replicating what is in front of them. Our students' eyes and minds have not yet been exposed to the world of modern art, or to all the wonderful materials out there that they can use and experience. Some students have already closed their minds to the endless opportunities which allow them to create, and learn in visual arts - one of the only subjects in which students can create and explore without fear of getting the answer 'wrong'. Visual arts is where there is colour; shape; texture; things that drip; splat and run; things that can be moulded and built; as well as amazing artworks to see and learn about which contradict everything they may have seen before. And yet each year some of my

new students seem to have already decided it is not for them. This is why I wanted to do this study, to better understand why some students are disinterested in visual arts when they reach high school.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions that framed this study were developed in order to explore the learning and experiences that Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers (GPST) provide for their students in visual arts in the primary school classroom, and the rationale behind these. The three research questions were as follows:

1. What visual arts practices do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers choose to include in their teaching?
2. What reasons do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers report regarding the extent to which they include visual arts in their teaching practice?
3. How do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of visual arts in their teaching practice?

A variety of reasons underpinned the choice of research questions. Question one was included because it had the potential to develop a deeper understanding of what visual arts Tasmanian GPSTs include in their classroom and how these are taught. The question was intended to elaborate on whether visual arts is taught as a discrete subject or integrated into other subjects and to determine whether the visual arts that is taught follows the visual arts curriculum. Question two was included to determine how regularly Tasmanian GPSTs include visual arts in their classroom and why this is so, thus informing an understanding of the influences which affect the amount of time spent teaching visual arts in the classroom. Question three was included in order to discover if Tasmanian GPSTs

feel competent and confident to teach visual arts and what external factors have contributed to their confidence and competency to teach the subject.

It was hoped that investigating these questions would help to develop an understanding of what visual arts 'looks like' in Tasmanian primary schools, and in so doing establish what further research may be developed to continue to improve visual arts teaching in Tasmanian primary schools.

1.3 Scope and Limitations

The major limitation for this study was the scope of the Masters of education by course work; because this thesis was in partial fulfilment of the Masters of Education by course work, it was limited in the amount of time that the study had to be completed. Due to this limitation it was decided that the study would focus on teachers and their perceptions of visual arts education through survey and interview rather than carry out a study that concentrated principally on students, even though they were the inspiration for this study.

It was decided that the study would include a survey which Tasmanian GPST teachers from the three education sectors: The Department of Education (DoE), Catholic Education (CEO) and Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) could choose to complete. The survey asked participants to answer closed Likert scale questions and open ended questions about their visual arts teaching, their pre-service training and their perceptions of visual arts. It was decided that at the end of the survey, participants could elect to participate in a follow up interview, thus elaborating on their survey responses. From those participants who agreed to a follow up interview, six were purposefully selected for interview. It was decided that it was important to ensure coverage of the F-6 levels of schooling and thus two participants were selected who teach at a kindergarten to grade two level, two from a grade three to four level and two from a grade five to six level, it was also decided to ensure

that participants were included from all three education sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent). A short audio recorded interview was then carried out with these respondents. Thus this study was limited to a state-wide survey and six interviews; in this respect this study provides some baseline data about visual arts practices and some depth from a relatively small sample of interview subjects. Further research may therefore develop these baseline data further, and include interviews with a wider selection of GPSTs. It would also be beneficial to conduct observations of students learning in visual arts in the general primary school classroom.

1.4 Structure

This dissertation is organised into five chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, explains the reasons for conducting the research while providing information relevant to and understanding the context for the study. Chapter two outlines relevant literature based on research conducted on visual arts education nationally and internationally, drawing links between the research questions and this research. Chapter three outlines the methodological approach underpinning the research, and the data collection instruments and analysis techniques. The fourth chapter focuses on a presentation and analyses of data and the main themes which arose from this. The final chapter forms conclusions from the analyses of data and applies these to the research questions as supported by relevant literature in addition to making informed suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature relevant to both areas of investigation: the status of visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools and the self-efficacy of those who teach it. In this chapter the literature review relates to the current status of visual arts education in schools and the importance of teacher knowledge and self-efficacy; “people who think they can perform well on a task do better than those who think they will fail” (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p.183). This review will be presented in the following two sections, drawn from the research questions underpinning this project:

2.2 The status of visual arts education

2.3 Confidence and competence to teach visual arts

2.2 The status of visual arts education

In Australian primary schools, visual arts is taught mostly by generalist teachers (Bamford, 2002; Davis, 2012; Garvis, 2009; Garvis & Pendergast, 2011, Roy, Baker & Hamilton, 2012), who often ironically lack the skills or confidence to teach visual arts effectively (Garvis et. al., 2011). Eisner (1997) found that due to a lack of training and experience GPSTs “provide a collection of projects or activities for students to explore without creating a program with the kind of continuity and practice necessary for the development of significant forms of learning in art” (p.61). As GPSTs are often not specifically trained to teach visual arts many students do not receive the benefits that a comprehensive visual arts education can offer, and often become disinterested in visual arts from an early age (Bamford, 2002; Davis, 2008; Eisner, 1997; Fiske, 1999; Ford, 2003; Roy et. al., 2012). As Hamilton (2010) explains “the Arts can do more than any other ‘essential’ learning area to help us make sense of our world” (p.46) however, a GPST who is not specifically trained in visual arts education will not be able to give students the opportunities to do this.

According to *Bowell (2011)* to ensure students receive the best visual arts experience “teachers need more than a superficial knowledge of both the content and the way it is taught” (p.100). If GPSTs do not have more than this superficial knowledge they cannot teach visual arts effectively, resulting in students who likewise lack confidence and skills.

Several other international and national studies support this, finding that teachers need to be well trained to teach visual arts effectively, however in the current climate, teachers often do not feel that they have been trained to teach this subject effectively (*Andrews, 2004; Bae, 2004; Bell, 2010; Bowell, 2010; Bresler, 1992; Ford, 2003; Freedman, 2000; Hausman, Ploof, Duignan, Brown & Hostert, 2010; Holt, 2006; Laird, 2012; Pavlou, 2004; Winner, 2007*). GPSTs need to be well trained in all areas of the curriculum however with an overcrowded curriculum this becomes increasingly challenging.

Garvis (2009) found that, due to “an expanding curriculum, reduced visual art content in pre-service teacher education and a focus on national numeracy and literacy standards threatens to undermine the confidence of primary school teachers to teach visual art” (p.99). This finding is further supported by the work of *Bowell (2011)*. *Garvis’ (2009)* study focused on pre-service teachers’ insights into teaching the arts and their practicum experiences. *Garvis* highlighted comments from subjects regarding their experiences in the classroom, such as “I had no arts experience during my practicum, because the focus was on maths and English” (p.7). International studies (*Andrews, 2004; Bae, 2004; Bell, 2010; Bowell, 2010; Bresler, 1992; Ford, 2003; Freedman, 2000; Hausman, Ploof, Duignan, Brown & Hostert, 2010; Holt, 2006; Laird, 2012; Pavlou, 2004; Winner 2007*) have expressed growing concern for the state of visual arts education in primary schools. As stated by *Ford (2003)*, “after reading the literature, we are often left with a negative image of what goes on in the primary sector in our subject” (p.264).

Standardised testing has also had a negative impact on the status of visual arts in primary schools. Much of the recent research conducted in Australia into visual arts education in primary schools expresses concerns about the effects of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) on visual arts teaching. In this environment, due to a lack of accountability for visual arts, the subjects which teachers are accountable for such as literacy and numeracy can monopolise teaching and learning in the classroom. The Whitlam Institute submitted a report to the Commonwealth Senate (June 2013) that demonstrates the findings from their research that sought “to examine the questions concerning the high stakes testing regime within the context of the purposes of education, and the best interests of the children” (Dulfer, Polesel & Rice, p.2). An online survey conducted for Australian teachers as part of this research found one of the unintended effects of NAPLAN included “narrowing of teaching strategies and of the curriculum” (p.5).

With a congested curriculum time spent teaching visual arts in primary classrooms continues to diminish as teachers feel pressure to spend more time teaching literacy and numeracy (Bowell, 2011; Bresler, 1992; Ford, 2003; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Gibson & Ewing, 2011; Lobascher, 2011; Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006; Patty, 2011). Garvis & Pendergast (2010) found this pressure was linked with the NAPLAN standardised testing which began in 2008. The study carried out by Garvis et. al. (2010), voices concern for the subjects that are not tested, particularly the Arts, asking the question “does arts education have a future in Australia against literacy and numeracy?” (p.111). In their study Garvis et. al. (2010) “explored the values, beliefs and perceptions of beginning generalist teachers in the middle years towards the arts, compared to literacy” (p.118). Their study focused on the perceptions of 201 beginning teachers in Queensland finding that “while teachers consider the arts important for middle year’s students, they suggested that they were pushed by school agendas to focus on other subjects” (p.118). See also: Bamford (2002); Bowell (2011) and Russell-Bowie (2002).

Literacy and numeracy are an important part of the curriculum and essential for a child's development. Both the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA 2013) and The Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) recognise literacy and numeracy as essential skills, however due to standardised testing there have been unintentional consequences that are disadvantageous for our students. As stated by Garvis et. al. (2010) "there was a common belief that literacy and numeracy were perceived to be more important for student learning and that accordingly arts education was marginalised in terms of time, student effort and perceived educational value" (p.117). The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) also released a statement on the arts titled *National education and the arts statement* (2008), this statement emphasised that "the arts are integral to our sense of identity- as individuals, as communities and as a nation" (p.4). The statement also draws from international and Australian research which "demonstrates the multiple benefits of an arts-rich education from an early age" realising "over and above the obvious development of individual creativity and self-expression, school-based arts participation can increase learners' confidence and motivation . . . and the wellbeing and life skills of children and young people" (p.4). The aim of this statement was to "drive change" (p.5), however the document does not provide the mechanisms needed for this shift to occur.

Laird (2012) conducted a study of three New Zealand primary schools which showed frustrations and concerns about visual arts education. Laird created a questionnaire for primary classroom teachers; she then interviewed several of the primary teachers who completed the questionnaire, gaining insight into the teacher's perspectives towards the benefits of visual arts education, factors that influence their visual arts teaching and pre-service preparation and support. Laird found that "a world-wide focus on quantitative measures of students' achievement . . . has had a major impact on what kinds of knowledge and achievement are valued" (p.50). In her study Laird also expressed concern about the views of several primary school teachers who "felt that the increased

emphasis on literacy and numeracy is putting more pressure on teacher's time and will further reduce time available for visual arts" (p.58).

Several studies conducted have focused on what GPSTs are actually teaching in their classrooms. An American study by Bresler (1992) observed how GPSTs from two very different schools teach visual arts. Through this study Bresler demonstrated a concern for the way GPSTs felt about the state of visual arts education, writing "the lack of arts content, sequence, and development of knowledge and skills was not perceived as a problem by teachers, principals, or parents" (p.410), thus affecting the quality of visual arts learning for the students. If there is no push for quality education by teachers, principals or parents, it makes it very difficult for children to have exposure to visual arts in an engaging and effective way. In regards to one particular case, Bresler (1992) found "the combinations of teachers' lack of art background with the lack of resources for art shapes art practice: teachers chose projects that were mainly easy to teach, easy to manage, and attractive to youngsters" (p.410) which is not quality visual arts education. This clearly resounds with the experiences of Hamilton (2010) who found that when she asked pre-service teachers to "describe activities that they witness generalist teachers doing in their classrooms" (p.49) when teaching visual arts, it was explained that "the teacher shows the product, gives step-by step directions and the children follow. The activity is meaningless and those students who do it their own way are criticized for not following instructions" (p.49).

Despite the growing body of research "affirming that learning in the Arts can ensure children are more engaged in deep learning and critical, creative thinking processes" (Gibson & Ewing, 2011, p.212), the prominent view reflected in the literature is that visual arts is not being taught effectively in Australian schools (Alter, Hays O'Hara, 2009; Davis, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Garvis & Pendergast, 2011; Gibson, 2003; Gibson & Ewing, 2011; McArdle, 2012; Paris, 2006; Peers, 2008; Sinclair, Jeaneret & O'Toole, 2009; Welch, 1995; Wright, 2012). To date there has been no research

identified specifically investigating the teaching of visual arts in Tasmania. As Davis (2008) wrote in the *National Review of Visual Art Education*, “visual education remains patently under researched” (p.68). For such an important aspect of the holistic development of children, “few studies explore art teaching in primary grades” (Bresler, 1996, p.398).

2.3 Confidence and competence to teach visual arts

It is clearly stated in the ACARA (2013) document that “all young Australians are entitled to engage fully in all the major art forms and to be given a balanced and substantial foundation in the special knowledge and skills base of each, this arts learning begins in Foundation to Year 2, Year 3 to 6 and Year 7 to 10”. However, studies based on primary school visual arts teaching have demonstrated a lack of teacher confidence and competence when teaching visual arts (Alter, Hays & O’Hara, 2009; Davis, 2012; Garvis, 2009; Laird, 2012; Pavlou, 2004; Welch, 1995), these authors attribute the following reasons for this: teachers’ perception of their own abilities; lack of quality pre-service training; lack of visual arts professional development and a lack of support or encouragement within the school to teach visual arts. According to Welch (1995) this lack of confidence or ‘self-efficacy’ is caused by “their perception of their own artistic ability and once in the classroom they have little time to remedy this situation” (p. 71). Teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher’s confidence to teach a subject. This confidence can be influenced by many factors including their own previous experience in visual arts making (Bowell, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2011). As stated by Bandura (1977)

the strength of people’s convictions in their own effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations . . . self-efficacy influences choice of behavioural settings. People fear and tend to avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their coping skills, whereas they get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations (p.193-194).

‘Competence’ refers to the teachers’ actual skill level and ability (Cheetham & Chivers, 1996) to teach visual arts. These two are separate because there is the possibility that a teacher could feel confident but is not actually competent in their teaching.

Self-efficacy plays a significant role in determining how teachers teach, and what teachers choose to teach in their classroom. If GPSTs have had success in their own visual arts learning, they will more likely feel confident to teach it, however if this is not the case, they are likely to avoid it or create lessons which are 'safe' (Garvis, Twigg & Pendergast, 2011), as Bandura (1977) states "successes raise mastery expectations; repeated failures lower them" (p.195). Garvis, Twigg & Pendergast (2011) in their Queensland study based on the "formation of self-efficacy beliefs in the arts" (p.36) claim that:

beliefs are created through decisions influencing actions, attitudes, emotions and thoughts. Thus, self-efficacy acts as a motivational construct, determining the actual amount of effort that an individual will bring to the task of teaching as they assess their ability to perform the teaching task successfully (p.37).

Therefore if a teacher lacks confidence about what they are teaching they may not teach it effectively, Welch (1995) in a study of the self-efficacy of New South Wales GPSTs in visual arts education asserts that in this respect "how people perceive themselves can affect the way they behave" (p.71). Citing numerous studies Davis (2008) raised concerns about the confidence of teachers, writing that "international and Australian research has identified that many of these students have limited arts experiences themselves and lack of confidence in their ability to teach the arts" (p.2).

In a Canadian study based on the need for curriculum renewal in the arts, Andrews (2004) writes "the development of teacher confidence to teach art in schools is essential" (p.78), if GPSTs do not feel confident they will not feel motivated to teach visual arts. Garvis and Pendergast (2011) similarly wrote "self-efficacy is known to have considerable impact on teacher effectiveness. If early childhood teachers have stronger teacher self-efficacy for the subject they are more likely to be motivated to teach that subject and persist with students in that subject" (p.10).

Pre-service training, if not effective in developing GPST confidence and competence to teach visual arts may be instrumental in their decision not to teach it, or teach it ineffectively. Several

studies have been conducted to analyse whether GPST pre-service training in visual arts is adequate in developing their knowledge and self-efficacy to teach the subject competently. In New Zealand a two year project conducted by Howell (2011) focused on the best way to support beginning teachers in building and developing their expertise in visual arts. This study revealed a lack of confidence amongst GPSTs in teaching visual arts, attributing this to a lack of support and training. Howell writes that “a primary school teacher’s confidence to teach visual art initially relies on their personal experience of visual art education during their pre-service education programme” (p.100). Howell developed a program using people skilled in visual arts in the community to help develop the confidence of pre-service teachers, believing this to be the best way to build the confidence of teachers in visual arts, stating that “given that the first two years are recognised as a time when teachers develop their teaching confidence and expertise, this was viewed as an opportune time for teachers to develop their confidence in the teaching of visual art” (p.101). Howell found through his research that when there is a combination of the following three important elements “1. Having hands on visual art experiences. 2. Using museums and galleries. 3. Reflecting on, and discussing, visual art practice and teaching” (p.112) there will be a positive development in primary school pre-service teacher’s knowledge and confidence to teach visual arts.

An action research project conducted by McArdle (2012) in Queensland, tried a different approach to University pre-service training to equip GPSTs with the skills they need to teach visual arts effectively in their classroom. This project arose from McArdle’s concerns that once again visual arts was not being taught effectively claiming “bright, colourful paintings give schools a look, and are read as evidence of busy, happy children. But, art is often relegated to a rainy Friday afternoon activity” (2012, p.92). Hamilton (2010) also found that “most pre-service teachers are used to the idea that art is a bit of a treat, something that students enjoy doing but they are not aware that there is so much to ‘it’” (p.49), therefore it appears that visual arts is generally seen as a fun, rewarding, break out activity as opposed to an intrinsically important domain of study.

A study conducted by Davis, S. (2012) focused on identifying pre-service teachers' perceptions of visual arts and their confidence to teach visual arts in Queensland, finding that pre-service teachers do lack self-efficacy in visual arts teaching, however she also claims:

I believe it is possible to build student confidence in teaching the arts . . . pre-service students need to have more opportunities for developing art specific knowledge and skills and putting them into practice in the classroom to build upon their emergent capacity (p.12).

If pre-service teachers' self-efficacy can be improved it will allow them to teach visual arts confidently, whilst understanding the benefits of visual arts education for students. This is important for visual arts education broadly because, as stated by Pavlou (2009) even though GPSTs lack confidence to teach visual arts they "will continue to be responsible for art in primary schools and therefore it is important to understand their needs and attitudes, and respond to them" (p.45). A similar study conducted in New Zealand by Bowell (2011) concluded that "the lack of support given to newly-trained generalist primary school teachers in New Zealand had reduced their confidence to teach visual art" (p.112). The findings from these studies stress that the majority of GPSTs do not feel that they are equipped to effectively teach visual arts in their classroom. In discussing early childhood education Bae (2004) writes that "it is clear that teacher training in early childhood education needs to prepare teachers more adequately with knowledge, skills, and confidence in providing art education to young children" (p.247).

According to Garvis (2009) GPSTs need to be supported in their pre-service training as well as in their beginning years of teaching to ensure they are confident to teach visual arts well. Ford (2003) in his study of GPSTs and their perceptions of visual arts found "a lack of trained teachers leads to poor teaching, which in turn leads to low status and low take-up of the arts and this then leads to lack of trained teachers, and so the situation perpetuates itself" (p.265). As a result of this situation, teachers often lack confidence because of their own visual arts experiences! As stated by Russell-Bowie (2002) in her study of the previous knowledge GPSTs have of visual arts from five different countries, "generalist teachers have consistently reported that they lack confidence, competence and support in teaching the arts in their classrooms" (p.162).

Recent research has found that this is increasingly becoming a problem in primary schools. Garvis (2009) found that it appears the majority of beginning teachers did not have a positive experience with the arts during practicum; they were influenced by negative teacher feedback, there was an absence of modelling in the arts and they were given little opportunity to master arts teaching (p.8), as a result of this

without these positive experiences to build knowledge, confidence and skills while on practicum experience, beginning teachers may believe they have little capability when teaching. . . . Long term, these experiences may contribute to lower teacher self-efficacy for the arts, adding to the current problem of arts teaching within generalist classrooms (p.8).

Without the appropriate support it is difficult for pre-service and beginning teachers to gain confidence teaching visual arts in their classroom, especially when so much importance is given to the assessment of literacy and numeracy, one beginning teacher when completing the survey by Garvis (2009) said “I had no arts experience during practicum, because the focus was on maths and English” (p.6), the majority of the survey participants answered similarly, suggesting that in this case the majority of pre-service teachers on their practicums were not encouraged to teach visual arts, and were not exposed to best practice visual arts teaching (Garvis, 2009).

It is evident through these studies that a vicious circle of neglect is taking place in visual arts education, in which visual arts is perceived as a relatively unimportant (relative to literacy and numeracy) part of the school’s curriculum, so pre-service teachers do not have support or help when in schools. The pre-service teacher training at a university level is also insufficient so pre-service teachers do not learn how and why visual arts is important, and because it is not being taught effectively in schools, pre-service teachers rarely experience visual arts on their practicum (Duncum, 1999). Pre-service teachers also bring to their study of visual arts education a low level of self-efficacy in this area, thus again contributing to a spiral of decline.

Not only do GPSTs need to feel more confident to teach visual arts, they also need to understand the value of visual arts for students. A study conducted by Grauer (1998) focused on the beliefs and knowledge of pre-service teachers toward visual arts and the relationship between this and what they teach. Grauer (1998) found “teacher’s knowledge about art, for example, did not seem as strong an indicator of willingness to learn about art education as were the teachers’ beliefs about what art education entailed” (p.350).

It is not reasonable to expect GPSTs to be competent in teaching visual arts if they have not received appropriate pre-service and in-service training and support. According to Eisner (1997) GPSTs are not “particularly well prepared to teach art” (p.61). Without adequate training for pre-service teachers and support whilst on practicum, GPSTs will not feel competent or confident to teach visual arts (Bamford, 2002; Ford, 2003; Garvis, 2009; Grauer, 1995). As is often the case for GPST, Andrews (2004) writes that “in the current educational context, teachers often find themselves teaching subjects they know very little about” (p.77). When this occurs teachers teach subjects which they have not been trained in, and in which they know little of the supporting curriculum or indeed have the rudimentary skills and knowledge of. This appears to be often the case for GPSTs when they teach visual arts (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011; Grauer, 1995).

Most GPSTs focus on developing their skills in areas where they feel most comfortable as well as areas that have the most support at the school they teach at, which is often literacy and numeracy (Bowell, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). The study conducted by Paris (2006) in Western Australia which focused on what is and needs to be taught in Universities for pre-service GPSTs to feel more confident in their ability to teach visual arts, found “the pre-service training at a variety of Universities has largely failed to meet the visual literacy needs of these emerging teachers” (p.179). Davis (2008) in her review of visual arts education in Australia interviewed several University teacher educators to gain insight into their perspectives; one University educator stated that

in Universities “graduates coming out don’t have as much arts based training. There used to be 30 hours in every year, but now it is only 12 hours [discipline] and 12 hours [pedagogy]” (p.177).

When coupled with a lack of self-confidence, and a lack of skills needed to be able to teach visual arts confidently and competently, the evidence seems to suggest that GPSTs are perhaps constrained in their ability to deliver quality visual arts education even before they enter a classroom.

It is important to develop the competence of GPSTs in visual arts and to do so as Grauer (1995) writes, the pre-conceived ideas these pre-service teachers have about how to teach visual arts need to be changed. Grauer states that:

It is not enough for teachers to be capable of replicating their own education in art, or even promoting the status quo in schools . . . One of the first challenges facing teachers is the transformation of their disciplinary knowledge into a form of knowledge that is appropriate for the students they are teaching . . . the key to pedagogical content is for teachers to be able to represent subject matter knowledge to students in a way that they can understand (p.19).

In New Zealand, Laird (2012) found that the participants in her study “felt their pre-service preparation to teach visual arts in a primary classroom had been quite inadequate, with more recently qualified teachers having had only a few hours of art-making in total” (p.58). From the responses received from the participants Laird concluded:

I felt concern that the inclusion of visual arts was seen to depend greatly on the individual’s commitment...The participants who expressed least confidence in the likelihood of visual arts retaining a foothold in the curriculum were those who had experienced minimal preparation either as pre-service or in-service training, and who had low self-confidence or knowledge in the area (p.60).

Research has shown that the majority of pre-service teachers have had negative experiences with visual arts while on practicum (Bae, 2004; Duncum, 1999; Garvis, 2009). According to Duncum (1999) due to the “limited time devoted to art during pre-service, inadequate in-service experiences, and competing curriculum demands, conspire to ensure that primary generalist poses very limited specialist knowledge in art and, for many teachers, no particular interest in Art” (p.15). It is important

that these negative experiences can be reduced because as Grauer (1995) writes “the beliefs and attitudes of prospective teachers toward teaching and learning in particular subject areas are powerful indicators of classroom practice in those subject areas” (p.26). In a research article by Grauer (1998) about the beliefs pre-service teachers hold toward visual arts, she found that when teaching visual arts, teachers do not necessarily follow the curriculum, and tend to teach the subject how they were taught. Grauer (1998) found that “unlike other subjects that are often driven by covering content in prescribed textbooks and by attempting to cover the content of government exams, decisions about the content and evaluation of art are very much in the hands of the classroom teacher” (p.362). This study shows that teachers are not following the visual arts curriculum and are sticking to visual arts lessons that they feel comfortable with to the detriment of the education of their students.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the literature pertinent to the research questions and has demonstrated that international and national research has consistently found that GPSTs are not teaching visual arts effectively in their classrooms. This is most commonly attributed to their lack of confidence and competence in working with visual arts and external pressure to focus on other areas of the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy due to required standardised testing. As a result of the push for literacy and numeracy, visual arts is being pushed to the sidelines, when it should be central to the learning of each child throughout all their years of schooling.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodologies underpinning this research project will be presented and discussed. This research project focuses on the perceptions and opinions of GPSTs and the approach that enabled the research questions to be answered with the most depth was the naturalistic method (Blaikie, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hatch, 2002; Punch, 2009; Stake, 1995). The sample of participants was selected using a purposive approach (Blaikie, 1993; Denscombe, 2007), to collect data which was representative of Tasmanian GPSTs. Data were collected using both survey and interview (mixed methods approach), which were then inductively analysed and then presented in the data analysis chapter. The use of inductive analysis helped to ensure data collected was reliable and valid.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The research project focuses on the following three research questions:

1. What visual arts practices do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers choose to include in their teaching?
2. What reasons do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers report regarding the extent to which they include visual arts in their teaching practice?
3. How do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of visual arts in their teaching practice?

The constructivist paradigm is, as stated by Hatch (2002) “individual constructions of reality [which] compose the knowledge of interest to the constructivist researcher” (p.15). Social science research requires the researcher to make the choice “between very different ontological (realist versus constructivist) and epistemological (outside versus inside) positions” (Blaikie, 1993, p. 203). It was essential in the initial stages of developing the framework for this study that the choice was made as to what ontological and epistemological position the study would follow. It was decided that a constructivist ontology would be the best methodological approach because of the research questions and the subjects being studied.

Using more than one method of data collection is known as a multiple methods approach. By using both survey and interview to collect data this follows the multiple methods approach which will allow for analysis of both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (survey/interview) data. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that the “use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (p.2), which demonstrates the strength of data collected by multiple methods. As stated by Denzin et. al. (1994)

a paradigm encompasses three elements: epistemology, ontology and methodology. Epistemology asks: How do we know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality. Methodology focuses on how we gain knowledge about the world (p.99).

Based on these three descriptions this research project is based in the qualitative paradigm. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of Tasmanian GPSTs about visual arts in their teaching practice, constructivist ontology is required where individual realities are understood to be different.

As stated by Denzin et. al. (1994) “realities are apprehend able in the form of multiple, intangible and mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature” (p.111). Throughout this research individual perceptions and beliefs were different, determined by the

personal experiences and environments with which they are surrounded. To discover their constructions of visual arts teaching and learning “the variable and personal (instrumental) nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents” (Denzin et. al., 1994, p.111). Again, the qualitative paradigm allowed these individual constructions to be explored.

This qualitative study relied heavily on the perceptions of survey respondents and interview subjects and on the themes that emerged from these data sets, and was therefore necessarily grounded in a constructivist view of the world. The multiple method approach and the inductive analysis of survey and interview data allowed for an in depth understanding of the phenomenon to develop.

3.3 Sample

Participants were selected using a method known as ‘purposeful’ or ‘purposive’ sampling. According to Denscombe (2007) “with purposive sampling the sample is ‘hand-picked’ for the research” and the approach is “applied to those situations where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data” (p.17). As this research investigated the perceptions of GPSTs they were themselves best placed to inform the research questions.

According to O’Leary (2010), there is a growing recognition that non-random samples can credibly represent populations if selection is done with the goal of representativeness in mind, and strategies are used to ensure samples match population characteristics. As stated by Kumar (1999)

sampling . . . is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting a fact, situation or outcome

regarding the bigger group. A sample or sub-group of the population you are interested in (p.148).

Creswell (2012) explains purposive sampling as when “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (p.206). Purposive sampling as described by Denscombe (2007) “is applied to those situations where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data” (p.17) and in the case of this research project, through analysis of data collected from the initial survey, the researcher was able to gain insight into the perceptions of the participants to choose those with the most potential to produce the most valuable data pertinent to the research questions.

As stated by Burns (2000) “the major task in sampling is to select a sample from the defined population by an appropriate technique that ensure the sample is representative of the population and as far as possible not biased in any way” (p.83). However, it is likely that only a small portion of the population will participate. This generalising process “is a necessary scientific procedure, since rarely is it possible to study all members of a defined population” (Burns, 2000, p.82). Due to the process of purposive sampling the interview participants “are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and their purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation” (Denscombe, 2007, p.17).

The interview stage enabled the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys and enabled the researcher to explore in depth the perceptions of GPSTs regarding visual arts in their teaching practices. Survey responses were received from teachers in all three education systems (DoE, CEO and IST). All survey respondents were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview, and in this sense these interview subjects ‘self-selected’ for participation in this stage.

Once three respondents from each system expressed an interest in participating in an interview, no more interview subjects were accepted, and any further potential subjects were thanked and informed of this. As Kumar (1999) explains; “the researcher only goes to those people who in her/his opinion are likely to have the required information and be willing to share it” (p.162).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process is integral to the type of data collected and the quality of data collected. As stated by Bamford (2002) “the method of research influences the sorts of knowledge that becomes evident and the meanings contained in this information” (p.138). The aims of this research project were to understand the general perceptions and practice of Tasmanian GPSTs. There were two distinct stages of data collection in this project: survey and interview.

3.4.1 Survey

In order to investigate the first research question: ‘What visual arts practices do Tasmanian GPSTs choose to include in their teaching?’ it was necessary to collect data that was broad in nature and that established the scope of visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools. Surveys, as stated by O’Leary (2010) are “the process of collecting data by asking a range of individuals the same questions related to their characteristics, attributes, how they live, or their opinions through questionnaire” (p.181). An online survey (see Appendix A) was opened to all GPSTs in Tasmania to establish the extent to which visual arts is included in primary teaching practice. There are three education systems in Tasmania: Department of Education (DoE), Catholic Education (CEO), and Independent Schools (IST). Invitations to participate were made to educators in all three systems.

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey, in order to easily access a large population and “produce quick results” (Sarantakos, 2005, p.263). This type of data collection is commonly used by social researchers and is an effective way to find out information from a larger population (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2012; Denscombe, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005). Surveys have the ability to reach a large number of respondents which can be easily compared, generate qualitative and quantitative data and be anonymous (O’Leary, 2010). The survey included questions to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. The survey asked both open questions and closed questions using a Likert scale response format. According to Creswell (2012) “the advantage of this type of questioning is that your predetermined closed-ended responses can net useful information to support theories and concepts in the literature” (p.220).

Creating a survey is a complex process, in order to ensure the survey would be successful in collecting effective data, the following process outlined by O’Leary (2010) was followed: “surveys require you to: plan your attack; develop your survey instrument . . .make necessary modifications; administer; and manage/analyse your data” (p.183). Following this procedure ensured the questions in the survey were non-biased, easy to comprehend, and collected relevant information for analysis.

3.4.2 Interview

After survey data were analysed, selected participants were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C, D and E for invitation, draft interview schedule and interview transcripts), it was ensured that interviewees represented all Tasmanian education departments as well as all primary grades. Denscombe (2007) writes that “with the semi-structured interview the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered” (p.176), which was important in order to allow participants the chance to elaborate on their perceptions and responses more freely, Denscombe continues to explain the effectiveness of semi-structured

interviews by writing “perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest” (p.176). This is particularly important for qualitative interviewers, as stated by Hatch (2002)

qualitative interviewers create a special kind of speech event during which they ask open-ended questions, encourage informants to explain their unique perspectives on the issues at hand, and listen intently for special language and other clues that reveal meaning structures informants use to understand their worlds (p.23).

Semi-structured interviews allowed a degree of freedom to explore areas of pertinence to the research questions. Punch (2009) writes, “it is a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (p.144). To conduct semi-structured interviews it is integral the interviewer has “listening skills and non-directive questioning techniques” (Burns, 2000, p.441) so the researcher can “uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organise their experience and make sense of their worlds” (Hatch, 2002, p.91). Denzin et. al. (1994) describe the interview as “a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening” (p.353).

O’Leary (2010) states “when you start to prepare [your interview] you will probably spend a lot of time thinking about what to ask and how to say it, and this is important. But even more important are your listening skills” (p.202), when conducting the semi-structured interviews, it was important to listen to the participants, as each participants’ opinion and experience were different, and it was important to ask probing questions in relation to this in order to let them expand on their answers to “gather the richest possible data” (O’Leary, 2010, p.204). It was integral that data collected from the interviews were an accurate representation of the perspectives of the individual interviewed. Sarantakos (2005) expands on this explaining that:

qualitative interviews do not use a strictly standardised approach. Rather, they employ a readiness to change, to correct and adjust the course of study as required by the research.

Interviewers are expected to engage in open discussion with the respondent and to maintain a stimulating, but not dominating role” (p.270).

According to Stake (1995) the purpose of a qualitative interview “is not to get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation. Formulating the questions and anticipating probes that evoke good responses is a special art” (p.65).

3.5 Data Collection Processes

Following the approval of the University of Tasmania (UTAS) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), and approval by the DoE, CEO and IST to begin the data collection process, potential respondents were invited to participate in the survey via email invitations. These invitations included a link to Survey Monkey which displayed an information screen, and an informed consent screen which respondents had to accept before they could complete the survey. The final screen of the survey thanked respondents and asked them to click on a link to email the researcher if they wished also to participate in an interview.

The results from the survey data determined those participants who would be invited to participate in the interview process. The selection of interview participants was purposive in order to “credibly represent the population” (O’Leary, 2010, p.168). Each participant was selected due to their survey responses, ensuring the group of interviewees “matched population characteristics” (O’Leary, 2010, p.168). The participants who were selected were contacted by the researcher to formally invite them to participate in the interview process. The researcher organised an appropriate time and place for interviews with each subject and these occurred between 18th November and 28th November 2013. The interviews were carried out depending on accessibility either online, which were recorded, or face to face at a meeting place of the interviewee’s preference, either in home, or at their school, which were recorded with a voice recorder. Each interview went for approximately thirty minutes.

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and data were analysed and coded after each interview in order to gain further insight and to look for links and ideas that had not already been considered so that the subsequent interview would be informed by the previous interview. Hatch (2002) explains “data analysis begins while data collection is going on, this means that whenever new data are added to the data set, all of the data should be read before analysis continues” (p.163).

After the interviews, transcripts were sent to each interview subject to member check. Stake (1995) states that “keeping a record of an interview is part of the artistry. . . A good interviewer can reconstruct the account and submit it to the respondent for accuracy and stylistic improvement” (p.66). This process ensured that data were accurate and the interviewee was satisfied with the transcript of their interview.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the ability to ensure that if a study were repeated following the same steps the results of the study would be the same. According to O’Leary (2010), reliability is classed as “consistency of methods” or “the extent to which a measure, procedure, or instrument provides the same result on repeated trials” (p. 37). Reliability was achieved in this study by inviting all Tasmanian GPSTs to participate, and purposefully selecting a sample of teachers from those who completed the survey that would best represent the views of the larger population. The survey questions were not biased and did not lead teachers to answer in any particular way. The semi-structured interviews focused on listening to the respondents and allowed for respondents to elaborate on their views with the use of probing questions (O’Leary, 2010).

Validity is defined as the logical interpretation of the meaning of data collected (Stake, 1995). O’Leary (2010) also defines validity as “true value” or “whether methods, approaches, and techniques actually relate to what is being explored” (p. 43). This study’s use of inductive thematic analysis helped to increase validity by ensuring that the themes that emerged from data were based directly on the words and phrases of participants.

3.7 Data Analysis

This study used an inductive or thematic data analysis technique which as stated by Braun & Clarke (2006) “is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p.79). The themes identified throughout the course of this study did “capture something important about the data in relation to the research question” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82), which allowed data to be analysed and coded thematically using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When analysing data, as stated by Punch (2009) “methods for the analysis of data need to be systematic, disciplined and able to be seen (and to be seen as in ‘transparent’) and described” (p.172). To do so, data collected from the interviews was organised and coded depending on the responses to find the similarities and differences; causes for why these teachers hold the beliefs that they do and the influences that have determined this.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic data analysis is widely used in qualitative research, but its actual application is greatly varied from study to study. Braun and Clark (2006) sought to clarify this style of data analysis, by proposing two types of thematic analysis, which are: deductive, or theoretical thematic analysis; and, inductive thematic analysis. While deductive refers

to the process of searching for evidence of pre-determined themes within a data set, inductive relates to establishing themes based directly on words or phrases that arise from the data. Hatch (2002) writes that “inductive data analysis is a search for patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made” (p.161). These ‘patterns of meaning’ emerge from data, and evolve as data are coded, enabling the researcher to move in and out of data as the phenomenon is better understood.

For this research project, particularly when conducting the interviews, the data needed to be constantly analysed to search for commonalities and discrepancies between the cases, as well as to establish links that may not have been considered previously. Hatch (2002) explains “data analysis begins while data collection is going on, this means that whenever new data are added to the data set, all of the data should be read before analysis continues” (p.163).

All data were analysed through “inductive category construction” (Hatch, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Sarantakos, 2005). Through the inductive process, according to Hatch “understandings are generated by starting with the specific elements and finding connections among them” (p.161). To analyse data collected from survey and interview in this research project the researcher needs to “search for patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made” (Hatch, 2002, p.161), therefore in this research project data was entered into a multitude of charts, and colour coded so that the researcher could discover and find links and themes that arose from the data. To ensure that all data were thoroughly understood data analysis occurred continuously following collection, as Stake (1995) writes “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p.71).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological and procedural underpinnings of this research project. The qualitative, mixed methods paradigm within constructivist ontology was explained to be the most relevant paradigm for this study as it allows for both survey and interview data to be collected and analysed. The inductive thematic analysis of data allowed for themes to arise from data collected which related to the research questions, allowing the researcher to explore the individual perceptions of Tasmanian GPSTs in relation to visual arts teaching.

Chapter 4 Data and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and analyse the findings from both survey and interview data collected from Tasmanian GPSTs. The first part of this chapter analyses survey data, followed by an analysis of data collected through the interviews. The next section of this chapter focuses on the themes which arose from the data and how data collected assisted in answering the research questions.

4.2 Survey

The survey was created using the program Survey Monkey (see Appendices A & B), a link to the survey was emailed to representatives of the CEO and IST who had previously agreed to distribute to all GPSTs in their respective school systems, while this link was made available on Infostream for all DoE staff. The survey included closed questions on a Likert scale and open questions to find out both qualitative and quantitative data. Whilst there is no comprehensive, current listing of all schools in Tasmania, this research suggests that there are around 190 schools teaching primary aged students across the three systems in the state.

From these three systems there were forty one responses. An approximate response rate of 22%. There are many difficulties in calculating a response rate for this survey because there is no definitive list of schools in existence, early childhood centres are represented differently to primary schools (sometimes included, sometimes not), and finally there is a bias in the data created by the optional nature of survey participation. Please note that five respondents did not answer all of the questions. Of the 41 respondents 33 (80.48%) were female, and 4 (9.76%) were male (4 (9.76%) did not answer the question). This may simply be an indication of the gender distribution amongst GPSTs

in Tasmanian schools. There was a broad range of ages amongst respondents, with the majority 14 (37.8%), falling between the ages of 31-40, 11 (29.7%) were aged between 51-60, 5 (13.5%) were between the ages of 41-50, 4 (10.8%) were over 60, 3 (8.2%) were aged between 21 and 30. There was an even spread of years these teachers had been teaching: 7 (18.92%) had taught for less than five years, 7 (18.92%) had taught for less than 10 years, 8 (21.62%) had taught between 11-20 years, 7 (18.92%) had taught between 21-30 years and 8 (21.62%) had taught for in excess of 30 years. The majority of survey participants 17 (45.9%), taught Prep – grade 2, 16 (43.2%) taught grade 3-4, 12 (32.4%) respondents taught grade 5-6 and 4 (10.8%) taught Birth – Kindergarten, some taught across grades and responded to more than one option, therefore there were 49 responses for this question. 18 (48.6%) survey participants, which was a large majority, were from North West Tasmania, Northern Tasmania also had 13 (35.1%) participants, there were 6 (16.3%) participants from Southern Tasmania, however there were no participants from the West Coast or East Coast of the state.

4.2.1 Regularity of visual arts in their teaching practice

Survey participants were asked to select the response which “best describes the regularity of visual arts in their teaching practice on average and were asked to select one option only” (see Table 1). The response options were as follows: 1) I include visual arts in my classroom everyday; 2) I include visual arts in my classroom most days in the week; 3) I include visual arts in my classroom several times a week; 4) I include visual arts in my classroom rarely; 5) I don’t include visual arts in my classroom.

Table 1 What best describes the regularity of visual arts in your teaching practice?

Response	Count	Percent
I include visual arts in my classroom everyday	4	9.8
I include visual arts in my classroom most days in the week	7	17.1
I include visual arts in my classroom several times a week	11	26.8
I include visual arts in my classroom around once a week	12	29.3
I include visual arts in my classroom rarely	1	2.4
I don’t include visual arts in my classroom	1	2.4

No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

The most numerous response was ‘I include visual arts around once a week’ which 12 (29.3%) respondents selected, 11 (26.8%) selected ‘I include visual arts in my classroom several times a week’. Data from this answer were compared with the grade that these respondents taught and no connection was found between the grade the respondent taught and the regularity of their visual arts teaching. Data demonstrated that the large majority of Tasmanian GPSTs did teach visual arts in their classrooms each week, with only 1 (2.4%) respondent selecting that they did not teach visual arts in their classroom and another 1 (2.4%) who said they rarely taught visual arts, 4 (9.8%) respondents taught visual arts everyday their classroom and 7 (17.1%) respondents taught it most days.

4.2.2 How they teach visual arts

The question “how do you approach the inclusion of visual arts in your classroom” was included in order to discover the different pedagogical approaches to teaching visual arts in Tasmanian primary school classrooms. More specifically, whether GPSTs integrated visual arts into other subjects, or whether they taught it as a discrete subject area.

Table 2 How do you approach the inclusion of visual arts in your classroom?

Response	Count	Percent
I don't teach visual arts in my classroom	1	2.4
I integrate visual arts into other curriculum areas (such as literacy and numeracy)	21	51.2
I teach visual arts as a separate (discrete) learning area	7	17.1
Other (please specify)	7	17.1
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

Data collected from this survey question showed that 21 (51.2%) respondents, which was the majority of GPSTs, integrated visual arts into other learning areas such as literacy and numeracy, 7 (17.1%) respondents answered that they teach visual arts as a discrete learning area and 1 (2.4%) said that they do not teach visual arts in their classroom. However, there were 7 (17.1%) who selected 'Other', and those that selected this option all explained that they both integrated and taught visual arts discretely depending on what they were teaching. Below are several of the responses written by those who answered 'Other': "there are times when I teach visual art as a separate learning area, but I also integrate visual art with investigations and literacy" (Respondent 8), Respondent 33 answered similarly by stating "sometimes my visual art activities are discrete but often they are part of other areas such as history or literacy" while Respondent 38 wrote "I integrate [visual arts] and also teach in isolation when teaching techniques or artists/styles". Respondent 39 explained in more detail that they "have a specific timetabled lesson for visual arts with a particular skill/focus, but also incorporate it into other curriculum areas where possible".

4.2.3 Respondent perceptions of the importance of visual arts

The purpose of the question "how important is visual arts within your teaching practice" was to find out what value GPSTs placed on visual arts education. Data collected from this question suggested that visual arts was generally seen as important: 10 (24.4%) respondents selected 'Essential', 13 (31.7%) respondents selected 'Important' and 10 (24.4%) respondents selected 'Very Important', however there were still 3 (7.2%) who selected 'Not Important' or 'Unnecessary'. When comparing data between this question and the question in relation to regularity, it became apparent that those who teach visual arts more regularly are also those who selected that visual arts was either 'Essential', 'Very Important' or 'Important', and those who did not include visual arts in their teaching practice or did so very rarely answered either 'Not Important' or 'Unnecessary'. When data from this question were compared with data about the quality of the respondent's pre-service training it was also evident that the respondents who selected 'Not Important' or 'Unnecessary' for this

question also answered ‘No’ to the question “do you think your pre-service training prepared you to teach visual arts in your classroom”.

Table 3 How important is visual arts within your teaching practice?

Response	Count	Percent
Essential	10	24.4
Very Important	10	24.4
Important	13	31.7
Not Important	2	4.9
Unnecessary	1	2.4
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

After survey respondents had selected how important visual arts was within their teaching practice, they were asked to elaborate on why they selected the answer they did. Below is a summary of these comments: Respondent 1 stated that “all students can find common ground with their learning, in any part of the curriculum, through art”, this response was interesting because the respondent, through experience had found that visual arts could help students learn in other areas of the curriculum. Respondent 6 answered “I believe that visual art is essential for all sorts of reasons. Especially confidence and self-esteem”, they saw a link between the impact of visual arts on developing confidence and self-esteem in children, this comment linked well with the comment from Respondent 8, who stated “as children grow in their visual arts skills they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Some children that do not shine academically and with sport have great success in the arts. It is an important way to share knowledge and express feelings and respond to texts”. Respondent 21 explained the value of visual arts in a kindergarten classroom by answering that “visual art is a vital part of the kinder program. It is how these children communicate and express themselves”, it was evident that this respondent relied on visual arts as the tool their children used to communicate and express themselves.

The following two respondents wrote that visual arts was a very important part of their teaching; “it's an integral part of my program and the way the children can communicate and express their ideas, even at an early age” (Respondent 23) and “I consider art to be a vital part of any child's learning. It stimulates their thinking, mind, eye hand coordination, imagination and their ability to express themselves” (Respondent 26), however Respondent 29 did not see visual arts as a stand-alone subject, only as a tool to assist with learning, stating “I enjoy teaching art but it is seen as a tool to assist in other areas rather than just a stand-alone subject”. Another respondent did not “feel [they] ha[d] the skills to teach it with any depth” (Respondent 30) even though they “believe it’s an important aspect of teaching”. Respondent 39 shared that they did not feel confident teaching visual arts, but they saw it as an important subject, “although I'm not so confident with teaching visual arts and don't really see myself as creative, it is as important as any other KLA and the children really enjoy it so it is vital”. From all the responses it became evident that the majority of respondents saw visual arts as an important part of the curriculum, however several lacked confidence in their abilities to teach it.

4.2.4 Pre-service training

When asked to select the response which best described their pre-service training in visual arts the majority of respondents, which was 15 (36.6%), selected ‘I completed 2 or more visual arts units in my Education Degree’, 9 (22%) respondents selected ‘I completed 1 visual arts unit in my Education Degree’, 6 (14.6%) completed some visual arts training, 2 (4.9%) did not complete any pre-service training in visual arts, 2 (4.9%) completed Visual Arts Degrees, 1 (2.4 %) completed a Visual Arts Diploma and 1 (2.4%) only experienced visual arts training on practicum.

Table 4 What best describes your pre-service training in visual arts education

Response	Count	Percent
I did not complete any pre-service training in visual arts in my Education Degree	2	4.9
I completed some visual arts training in my Education Degree	6	14.6
I completed 1 visual arts unit in my Education Degree	9	22.0
I completed 2 or more visual arts units in my Education Degree	15	36.6
I completed a Visual Arts Diploma	1	2.4
I completed a Visual Arts Degree	2	4.9
I only experienced visual arts training on my practicum (professional experience)	1	2.4
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

When comparing data between the amount of pre-service training and how important the respondents selected visual arts to be, it was evident that 18 respondents who received more pre-service training in visual arts, (which are the 15 (36.6%) respondents who completed 2 or more visual arts units, the 2 (4.9%) respondents who completed a Visual Arts Degree and the 1 (2.4%) respondent who completed a Visual Arts Diploma) placed more value on the subject. Of these 18 respondents, 8 selected that visual arts was 'Very Important', 4 selected 'Important' and 6 selected 'Essential' in their teaching. They also selected 'Yes' to the question in relation to preparedness to teach visual arts. However, those that did not receive as much visual arts training do not see it as important. For example, Respondent 10 selected that they did not receive any visual arts pre-service training and did not see visual arts as important.

There was a link found between the GPSTs ability to both integrate visual arts and teach visual arts discretely and the amount of pre-service training they received. Respondents 6 and 34 (4.9%) completed Visual Arts Degrees, were teaching the general classroom, and taught visual arts as both a discrete learning area and integrated it into other subjects, they also both felt extremely confident to teach visual arts, however most other respondents taught visual arts as either one or the other (discretely or integrated), this demonstrates that those with more visual arts training had the ability to be more flexible with their teaching programs in regards to visual arts.

4.2.5 Preparedness to teach visual arts

When asked if respondents thought their pre-service training prepared them to teach visual arts in their classroom, 15 (36.6%) of the respondents answered ‘Yes’ while the other 21 respondents, which were just over half (51.2%) answered ‘No’.

Table 5 Do you think you pre-service training prepared you to teach visual arts?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	15	36.6
No	21	51.2
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

This demonstrates that a majority of the respondents did not feel they were adequately trained to teach visual arts. This is consistent with Davis (2012) who found that pre-service teachers do lack the self-efficacy to teach visual arts. Those who felt their pre-service training to be most valuable were all aged between 41-50 and 50+ and had been teaching for in excess of 11 years. Respondent 11 recognised that “it is a much more broad field now than it was when I trained”, which perhaps showed their perception that there was a lot more that pre-service teachers needed to learn now than previously.

The written responses of the respondents who trained over a decade ago all showed that they had quality lecturers who taught them essential visual arts skills in an educational context: Respondent 8 stated “we had two wonderful visual art tutors who taught us a range of skills in a variety of art mediums with mostly practical learning”, Respondent 21 wrote “I had an outstanding lecturer Edward Broomhall who had a huge impact on me. He was passionate about visual art and this influenced me greatly”, Respondent 23 stated “I became more confident as I studied printmaking etc. and also had 2 wonderful lecturers in Art who were great role models and teachers of the value of Art

for children in the daily curriculum”, and Respondent 33 stated “I was fortunate enough to train under the guidance of the late Terry Woodward and also Edward Broomhall. I completed several units of study as part of my 3 year training (1970-72). I also completed a unit on Studies in Craft as part of my B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education)”.

Those who did not feel they were adequately trained learnt more when they started teaching through other teachers and self-study. Respondent 14 stated “my art knowledge has been gained from work experiences, and self-study. Uni[versity] did not provide what life experiences had already taught”, while Respondent 29 said “I had a year teaching grade 7 Art with an excellent Art teacher helping me out. That prepared me so much more than what is offered in the degree”, Respondent 15 explained that “there could have been more time spent teaching this subject area and providing ways to assess work and more examples of classroom activities”, while Respondent 16 wrote “too limited in time, experiences, mostly learn while teaching, especially from other teachers”, Respondent 19 stated that there were “not enough genres covered, not enough child friendly topics”, Respondent 39 did not find their visual arts pre-service training adequate “because it was not relevant to primary school children and it seemed more like an adult art class”. Those who did not answer that their pre-service training was adequate stated that not enough time was spent on how to teach visual arts it was more about the respondents creating their own artworks. Respondent 1 stated “it was not enough for me and I have an avid interest in this area. The unit covered too much over too short a period and it did not allow for us to share and explore further opportunities”, Respondent 28 wrote “The units at Uni[versity] are very limited and for me did not give very many examples of how to integrate art in to the classroom and how to make links with other areas of the curriculum”.

It became evident from these responses that those who trained several years ago (Respondents 8, 21, 23 and 26) stated that they received quality visual arts pre-service training. Those who did not

feel they were adequately trained received their pre-service training more recently and learnt more when they started teaching through colleagues and self-study.

4.2.6 Confidence, skills and knowledge to teach visual arts

The question “how do you rate your confidence to teach visual arts in your classroom” required respondents to rate how confident they were to teach visual arts. Response options provided were: 1) Extremely Confident; 2) Confident; 3) I get by; 4) I lack confidence; 5) I have no confidence.

Table 6 How do you rate your confidence to teach visual arts in your classroom?

Response	Count	Percent
Extremely Confident	9	21.9
Confident	13	31.7
I get by	10	24.4
I lack confidence	4	9.8
I have no confidence	0	0.0
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

Data did not show a connection between their age, years teaching, or the grades that they taught and their confidence to teach visual arts. It was evident that those who were more confident and who answered either ‘Extremely Confident’, which were 9 (21.9%) respondents or ‘Confident’ which were 13 (31.7%) respondents taught visual arts more regularly. There were 4 (9.8%) respondents who ‘lacked confidence’ and 10 (24.4%) who just ‘get by’, and when asked how often they taught visual arts answered either that they do not teach visual arts, or they rarely taught it, which demonstrates clearly that teacher confidence does effect regularity. Data also displayed that those who lacked confidence to teach visual arts also considered visual arts as not important and did not feel their training prepared them adequately.

All of the 10 (24.4%) respondents who answered that they ‘get by’ in regards to their confidence teaching visual arts stated that they would like activities they can teach in the classroom. This suggests that these respondents perhaps wanted a ‘quick-fix’ for visual arts. Of the 13 (31.7%) who were ‘confident’ to teach visual arts and the 9 (21.9%) who were ‘extremely confident’, they answered that they had higher skills and knowledge and wanted to continue to develop these through further professional development, which contrasted with those who lacked confidence because they said that they were not interested in further skill development. 5 (12.2%) of the 22 (53.6%) respondents were either ‘extremely confident’ or ‘confident’ to teach visual arts said they had ‘extremely good skills’, 12 (29.3%) respondents selected ‘good’ and 5 (12.2%) had ‘average’ skills, while of the other 14 respondents who were not as confident, 1 (2.4%) selected they had ‘good’ skills, 6 (14.6%) had ‘average’ skills, 5 (12.2%) selected ‘poor’ and 2 (4.9%) ‘extremely poor’ (see Table 7).

Table 7 How do you rate your visual arts skills?

Response	Count	Percent
Extremely Good	5	12.2
Good	13	31.7
Average	11	26.8
Poor	5	12.2
Extremely Poor	2	4.9
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

Data collected from this question demonstrated that the majority of respondents either felt their skills were ‘good’ which 13 (31.7%) selected of ‘average’ which was selected by 11 (26.8%) which aligned with their responses regarding their confidence to teach visual arts; those who were confident also felt they had good visual arts skills, and those who were not confident rated their skills as poor.

Table 8 How do you rate your knowledge of the visual arts curriculum?

Response	Count	Percent
Extremely High	2	4.9
High	10	24.4

Average	18	43.9
Poor	3	7.3
Extremely Poor	3	7.3
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

Respondents were also asked to rate their knowledge of the visual arts curriculum, the majority which were 18 (43.9%) respondents rated their knowledge as ‘average’ or ‘high’ 10 (24.4%), this was interesting as it contradicted the answers given to the question in regards to pre-service training, as 51.2% of respondents did not believe their pre-service training prepared them to teach visual arts.

4.2.7 Desire to learn about visual arts

When asked whether the respondents would “like to develop their skills and knowledge of visual arts further” a large majority; 24 (58.5%) respondents, answered that they wanted to improve, while the other 12 (29.3%) respondents answered ‘maybe’, none of the survey respondents, even those who did not see visual arts as important, answered ‘no’ to this question.

Table 9 Would you like to further develop your skills and knowledge of visual arts?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	24	58.5
No	0	0.0
Maybe	12	29.3
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

The respondents were asked why they answered this question the way they did, and those respondents who answered ‘maybe’ tended to be apprehensive about what the visual arts professional learning would be about, Respondent 2 stated “depending on what is on offer. Most professional development I do is related to literacy or numeracy”. As stated in the literature, this is consistent with

the diminishing time spent teaching visual arts in primary classrooms as teachers feel pressure to spend more time teaching literacy and numeracy (Bowell, 2011; Bresler, 1992; Ford, 2003; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Gibson & Ewing, 2011; Lobascher, 2011; Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006; Patty, 2011).

As may be seen in Table 9, several participants selected that they would like to take part in visual arts professional development, but when asked to elaborate on their answer, several said that they found it hard because there was so much they had to do and learn that it was challenging for them to find time for visual arts professional development, Respondent 34 stated “time poor, but willing”, Respondent 24 wrote “crowded curriculum”, Respondent 3 wrote “it works for me in primary, but with all competing areas in the Australian Curriculum, I am on my way to not wanting to tackle any extra learning - I think I am on the way to combat fatigue”, another time poor respondent wrote “I do some reading from the school library to improve my knowledge, but my time is fairly committed already” (Respondent 8). Again this confirms that not enough time or value is placed on visual arts education.

4.2.8 School support for visual arts education

In response to the question “how would you rate the support provided by your school to implement visual arts in your teaching practice” 16 (39.0%) respondents answered that they had ‘some support’, however 10 (24.4%) respondents answered that they received ‘no support’, this was a significant number as it was a quarter of survey respondents.

Table 10 Rate your school’s support to implement visual arts in your teaching practice?

Response	Count	Percent
Very well supported	2	4.9
Supported	8	19.5

Some support	16	39.0
Not actively supported	10	24.4
Discouraged	0	0.0
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

Data showed that those who answered they had no support, also lacked confidence, skills and knowledge of visual arts. When compared with other questions data showed that those respondents who rated the support from their school as ‘very well supported’ or ‘supported’ had a teacher or senior staff member who was passionate about visual arts, they also had better resources, a better budget and there was more staff collaboration and staff learning off one another.

4.2.9 Professional development

This question asked survey respondents “as a teacher have you taken part in any visual arts professional development”, this question was asked to determine whether there was visual arts professional development on offer and whether these respondents were aware of it and had participated in it. Data demonstrated that 22 (53.7%) respondents had taken part in visual arts professional development at some stage throughout their career to date.

Table 11 As a teacher have you taken part in any visual arts professional development?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	22	53.7
No	14	34.1
No Response	5	12.2
Total	41	100

When asked to elaborate their answer and explain whether the professional development was helpful or not, it became evident that a lot of visual arts professional development took place a considerable time ago; Respondent 2 wrote “very little visual art PD has been available in the north

recently”, Respondent 3 wrote that they had participated in visual arts professional development “many years ago, in another state, regularly there were visual art/craft seminars for primary generalists, but in the 80s, the will and the money dried up, however they were not as regular anymore” and Respondent 16 wrote that they had participated in professional development for visual arts, but that it was “a long time ago”.

4.3 Interview

From the survey data six interview participants were purposefully selected to be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. This purposive process does have some bias attached to it, because it could be said that those participants who elected to participate in an interview chose to because of their interest in this area. However, it was ensured through this selection process that there was an even spread of participants from the DoE, CEO and IST as well as a spread across grades. This was possible for the DoE and CEO participants; however no survey respondents from IST indicated that they would participate in the interview. After the selection process was complete the six participants selected were contacted and invited to participate in the interview, and those who were not selected were emailed to thank for offering their time. Five of the participants who were contacted were happy to participate in the interview, however the sixth participant could not be contacted as was the same for other survey participants who had nominated they would be happy to participate in the interview, this only allowed the researcher to interview five different participants. Interviews were conducted with one face to face or over the phone, half an hour meeting which was digitally recorded and then transcribed.

The thematic inductive analysis of interview data revealed two main themes which will be elaborated in the following section:

4.4.1 GPSTs determine what visual arts ‘looks like’ in Tasmanian primary schools

4.4.2 Lack of accountability for visual arts education

A summary of the interview participants' perceptions is below; please see Appendix E for the interview transcripts which support and further elaborate the following summary of the interview subjects' perceptions of their own visual arts teaching. All subjects are provided with pseudonyms.

4.4 Themes

4.4.1 GPST determine what visual arts 'looks like' in Tasmanian primary schools

The five interview participants each commented on the personal value they attribute to teaching visual arts in their classroom, explaining a variety of reasons for this. The five different subjects each had a different reason for valuing visual arts in their classrooms including: influences from previous teachers or parents who saw its value and inspired them, and most interestingly all five subjects recalled having positive experiences of their own when teaching visual arts in their own classrooms, which has attributed to the value they place on visual arts.

It is interesting to note that 4 of the 5 interview participants commented on their perceptions of their colleagues' negative attitudes toward visual arts. Due to a lack of accountability for the provision of visual arts education the subjects explained that teachers who did not share their positive attitude toward visual arts did not teach it, therefore each individual GPST determined whether they would teach visual arts, what visual arts they would teach and how they would teach it.

Throughout the interviews the participants were asked to explain why they taught visual arts in their classrooms. Luzette, a grade 5/6 teacher on the North West Coast of Tasmania, stated that "all children learn differently" and visual arts is one way for some students to really engage in their work. Luzette was not taught visual arts as far as she can remember throughout her schooling until she

started at teachers college, and is not confident in her own art making. However, when she started teaching she saw the benefits the children got from visual arts, explaining “I have never considered myself very good at art, but I really like teaching it”. Lilly, a grade 5/6 teacher in Northern Tasmania explained that she saw visual arts as “really important for creativity in our children”. Both subjects mentioned the importance of ‘creativity’, which they said can be achieved through visual arts. Isaac, who taught a grade 3/4 class in Northern Tasmania, believed visual arts could be used to support many other subjects in the classroom. When he taught he used visual arts in a variety of ways, because he realised through experience that using visual arts he could teach ideas or other abstract notions through hands-on and interactive ways because “it helps understand concepts that are too abstract to put into words”.

At different stages throughout each of the interview participants’ schooling or at home they had positive experiences in and through visual arts. As stated by Gibson and Ewing (2011), one of the reasons that may determine whether teachers teach visual arts in their classroom was the “teachers own prior experiences” (p.2). Matilda a grade 3/4 teacher on the North West Coast said that visual arts was always in her life because “my mum is an artist . . . so from a little tiny person . . . we were always encouraged to be drawing and colouring in”. She also had positive experiences with visual arts throughout her schooling because she had “a couple of great art teachers” who did “really different stuff”, she saw that visual arts was important; “when I went to school (I graduated 30 years ago) . . . everybody had an art department, it wasn’t just this fit it into your curriculum”. Matilda did not receive any visual arts training in her one year Graduate Diploma of Education; however she placed importance on visual arts because of her personal experiences.

Dorothy, a kindergarten teacher on the North West Coast of Tasmania explained that she discovered the benefits of visual arts education when completing her education degree because “we had two wonderful education lecturers in Art” who were “teaching us to teach the children”, in her

survey answers Dorothy also explained that she “did Art as a major . . . part of my degree for 4 years”. She explained that because of the amount of pre-service training and the quality of pre-service training in visual arts education she received, it made her realise how important visual arts education is and how important it is for children to create their artworks themselves in order to learn through the creative process.

Lilly spent the first part of her education degree at Griffith University in Queensland and then transferred to UTAS to complete her degree. While studying at Griffith Lilly said that they “went through some proper techniques, like papier mache and charcoal drawing, and it gave me some ideas” and when she moved to UTAS she undertook a unit in Sculpture which “taught me more about abstract art and how not all art has to be you know, drawing exactly what you can see, which was probably a good thing for me”. However, she said that she would have liked to learn a little more about how to teach visual arts. This, however is contradictory to what recent research into visual arts teaching states to be beneficial for GPSTs, as *Bowell (2011)* wrote, to ensure students receive the best visual arts experience through an exposure to a wide variety of skills and art media “teachers need more than a superficial knowledge of both the content and the way it is taught” (p.100). Lilly said that she did ok when teaching visual arts, but she would like to be shown more about what she could teach students.

Luzette, when completing her teacher training said that visual arts “was a compulsory thing” and she found it very helpful because it built her confidence when working with different visual arts media and showed her “lots of different things you can do”, this was good for Luzette because she believed that she “wasn’t very good at a lot of things, but still had a go”, which she believed was important because teachers need to be able to teach a variety of subjects, even those they don’t feel confident in, however it is important to at least “have a go”.

Interview data demonstrate the importance of quality visual arts engagement for teachers. The examples given by the interview participants show that quality visual arts experiences, throughout any stages of learning, whether at home, school, or University positively influenced these GPSTs beliefs about the value of visual arts education.

Each of the subjects indicated that they had positive experiences when teaching visual arts in their classroom whether integrated or discrete. The positive experiences they reported are reflected by Danko-McGhee & Slutsky (2003) who state that visual arts “allow[s] children to view the world from a variety of perspectives make[ing] an important contribution to their quality of life” (p.13).

Dorothy, taught at a kindergarten level and stated that she used visual arts all the time, she believed that “little children communicate through drawing” because “they just draw to communicate their ideas, how else can you get them across?”, as Roy, Baker and Hamilton (2012) write, the arts “enable[s] children to engage through authentic processes as artists, as makers and as responders” (p.15). Dorothy explained that when her children were making their artworks it was not all about how they looked “you just accept what they do”, the visual arts making process itself was more important. This indicates that Dorothy understands the importance of process and that the end product is not as important as the process the children took to get there. Dorothy believed that success in visual arts is important, stating “you want them to get success so they’ll have another go” and that giving children success and accepting what they do without criticism at a young age encouraged them to enjoy creating artworks throughout their education.

Like Dorothy, who used visual arts as a way for her children to communicate and understand their worlds, Isaac (3/4 grade teacher) said that he had found through his own experiences in the classroom that using visual arts to teach concepts from other subjects in a hands-on way helped his

students to understand what he was teaching on a deeper level, he explained that his reason for this was “because I understand how different minds work and I see that it’s also therapeutic, it’s relaxing, and a lot of the learning that can take place can be subconscious”.

Luzette (5/6 grade teacher) had noticed that in recent years a lot of her students already had preconceived ideas about whether they were good at visual arts or not, which demonstrates that some of her children already doubted their abilities in visual arts even before they reached grade 5! She states that “I’ve got kids who won’t have a go . . . you know ‘I can’t do this, this doesn’t look right’ something must be happening between kinder and upper primary”. Some of the children in Luzette’s class were not having positive experiences in visual arts, because they did not feel that their artworks were good enough. Luzette could see the value of visual arts for all her students and believed it should be taught regularly in every primary school classroom, because “it also caters for those kids that aren’t strong in other areas, it gives them a chance to say this is my area it gives them a chance to really be good at it. And I’ve got a few like that, one struggles with literacy but art, he always does a great job and he’s always happy and proud of it”.

Each interview participant described different levels of school support for visual arts. All participants said that in each of their schools there was no active support or push for teachers to teach visual arts, there were no guidelines in respect of what to teach from senior staff. However, even though there was no active support from senior staff there was also no one telling them that they could not do things or that they could not buy visual arts supplies, therefore although the support was not active, visual arts was not necessarily being discouraged. Each of the interview participants made comment that at the school they each taught at there were some visual arts supplies which the schools provided, however most also used a substantial amount of their own class budget to ensure they had the supplies they needed to teach visual arts in their classroom.

Dorothy felt that she was supported at her school, however she was unsure what would happen in the future because a new principal had started at her school, stating “I don’t know what will happen now, well we have a new principal so I don’t know, but other senior staff have been ok. I think they value it as an important part of education, I mean there’s an art curriculum isn’t there?”, she believed that with a new principal it could bring about change and was unsure what that would look like for visual arts. Does this mean that Dorothy believed visual arts to be at the whim of the principal even though it is a core subject in the curriculum? Such an attitude would be unthinkable in respect of literacy or numeracy.

Isaac’s experiences were very different to Dorothy’s, he did not believe that his school placed value on visual arts and he “spen[t] nearly all my budget on art equipment” to ensure he had what he needed. Isaac believed that his school valued “numeracy and literacy, pretty well and I work at a catholic school so they really value religious education”. As stated in the literature, much of the recent research conducted in Australia into visual arts education in primary schools expresses concerns about the effects of NAPLAN on visual arts teaching and the pressure that is put on primary school teachers to ensure their students can achieve the best results in the testing areas of literacy and numeracy (Bowell, 2011).

Luzette similarly had to spend a lot of her own class budget on art supplies because “our bloody storeroom is locked up with a lock and key and you’re not allowed in . . . but see I spend a fair bit of my class budget on art stuff”. Visual arts received varying levels of support from the different schools that each of the interview participants taught at. Does this mean that in Tasmanian primary schools visual arts is dependent on who is teaching it and what they value? If there continues to be a lack of accountability for visual arts is this sustainable?

All subjects perceived a lack of available visual arts professional development for GPSTs. They were ignorant of any professional associations that offered visual arts education professional development. Data collected from the survey showed that 87.8% of respondents would like to participate in visual arts professional development, but as Respondent 3 answered “there were several in the 80’s and then the will and money dried up”. This again leads to sustainability, why was it perceived by participants that there was not as much visual arts professional development now compared with thirty years ago?

Matilda said that she struggled to find visual arts professional development stating “nup, there’s been one or two, where they’ve said you could do this or that to use art in your classroom more and I’ve looked at it and they don’t look as though they would help me”, and Dorothy had “been to some of the Zart Art [a local art supply store] ones, they’re not bad for ideas”. However, Lily had “never seen any to go to”, but would like to “take part in it”. The visual arts professional development that they had been aware of was limited and commonly the only ones they were aware of were run by Zart Art. Luzette, like Dorothy had taken part in several Zart Art professional developments which she thought were good, however she had noticed that there wasn’t a lot of visual arts professional development. All interview subjects and 87.8%% of survey participants wanted to further develop their skills and take part in visual arts professional development; but they are time poor because other subjects such as literacy and numeracy are taking precedence, as Respondent 16 wrote “most professional development I do is related to literacy or numeracy”, which supports Garvis et. al. (2010) who asked the question “does arts education have a future in Australia against literacy and numeracy” (p.111). The perceived lack of visual arts professional development supports Gibson & Ewing (2011) who found that “to date Australian education systems have afforded the Arts little funding, few resources and provided little teacher professional learning to enable teachers to develop the confidence and expertise to lead with the Arts when it is appropriate and relevant” (p.212).

4.4.2 A lack of accountability for visual arts education

All five interview participants said that in their school the amount of time each teacher taught visual arts was a matter of personal choice. It is clear that schools did not make teachers accountable for visual arts education and therefore teachers could choose how and if they wanted to teach visual arts in their classroom, despite curriculum presence. The interview participants explained that in their schools, teachers were not accountable for what visual arts they were teaching and as a result of this even the interview participants, who all said they saw visual arts as important had not looked at the visual arts curriculum. This finding is supported by Bresler (1992) who stated that if there is no push for quality education by teachers, principals or parents, it makes it very difficult for children to have exposure to visual arts in an engaging and effective way.

Each of the subjects taught visual arts regularly in their classroom and outlined approximately how much time they spent each week teaching visual arts. As was evident in the survey, recipients who answered that they felt confident to teach visual arts also taught it more regularly than those who did not feel confident. The literature explains, self-efficacy plays a significant role in determining how teachers teach, and what teachers choose to teach in their classroom. Welch (1995) in a study of the self-efficacy of New South Wales GPST in visual arts education believes that in this respect “how people perceive themselves can affect the way they behave” (p.71), therefore those GPSTs who did not feel confident to teach visual arts would choose not to teach visual arts regularly or at all in their classroom.

Dorothy set up “at least two art activities” everyday, her classes were constantly learning and exploring using visual arts, and as stated by McArdle (2012) “students learn, through their own experience” (p.104). Matilda said that she incorporated visual arts activities on Tuesdays and Fridays

into what she called “rotational activities” these activities were based on a topic her students were learning about in class. These two examples demonstrate the difference between visual arts learning in a kindergarten classroom and a grade 3/4 classroom, displaying that in a Kindergarten class visual arts is embedded into everything the children do, however this grade 3/4 teacher has chosen to limit it to two blocks a week in her classroom.

Lilly (grade 5/6 teacher) believed that visual arts could be taught at any time “if it filters into something else we are doing in the curriculum it can be at any time” however specific visual arts activities in her classroom are taught on a Monday afternoon. This is consistent with McArdle (2012) who found in her research that “art is often relegated to a rainy Friday afternoon activity” (p.92).

Throughout the interview process it became evident that none of the interview participants had looked at the Tasmanian visual arts curriculum, or the draft Australian visual arts curriculum, this did not align with survey data which showed that 69.2% of recipients felt they had at least an average understanding of the visual arts curriculum. Instead of using the curriculum documents several of the interview participants said that they relied on the internet for ideas, this supports the literature which states that various international and national studies have expressed concern for the quality and depth of the visual arts teaching which takes place in primary school classrooms (Alter, Hays & O’Hara, 2009; Bamford, 2002; Bresler, 1992; Ford, 2003; Holt, 1997; Laird, 2012; McArdle, 2012; Roy, Baker & Hamilton, 2012). Luzette did not use the visual arts curriculum document because she just allowed them to progress from where they were at. As stated by Eisner (1997) “elementary school teachers [tend] to provide a collection of projects or activities for students to explore without creating a program with the kind of continuity and practice necessary for the development of significant forms of learning in art” (p.61). Without looking at the curriculum document how can GPSTs know where their students are at or what to teach them to further develop their visual arts learning?

Dorothy said that she did not use the visual arts curriculum document because she used the early years framework, which “is all about the child so [visual arts] is just in there, it’s part of their whole development and the whole curriculum”. This statement is consistent with Bruce (2011) who states that the early years the teachers role in visual arts education is to “create both an atmosphere and an environment that cultivates creativity” (p.44), and Roy et. al. (2012) who state that the role of the early childhood teacher is as “a learning and curriculum specialist with a breadth and depth of knowledge about the curriculum its connections . . . [and] have expertise in the individual learning styles and idiosyncrasies of each child” (p.22). Isaac said he found the Tasmanian visual arts curriculum to be “too basic I suppose for what was going on in primary school and I always try and hit a lot higher”, so he explained that “I have a lot of ideas in my head already, but I also find quite a few things online and things like pintrest have great ones, and just googling to get ideas”. This was similar to Matilda, who also relied heavily on the internet for ideas, who said “I haven’t even looked at the curriculum for art and how bad is that! And I think, well do they have a curriculum and obviously they do, and who looks at it cause who has time to make it, because it’s not accountable you know”. This is inconsistent with other curriculum areas, due to the lack of accountability for visual arts, it has allowed teachers to teach it without looking or understanding the curriculum; however this could not happen with subjects such as literacy and numeracy.

Lilly admitted openly that she had “no idea what the visual art curriculum looks like” a situation she shared with Matilda who wasn’t sure that there was a visual arts curriculum! Because Matilda was not accountable for what visual arts she was teaching, she said that she was not using the visual arts curriculum because it would have taken extra time.

Matilda also worked with another teacher at her school who lacked self-efficacy in her visual arts teaching and therefore only taught visual arts in their classroom for special occasions such as Christmas because she “has no artistic ability”. This statement displayed that the other teacher Matilda

was going to support did not do any other visual arts lessons with her students, which meant that for that year the only visual arts education their students received was creating Christmas decorations because visual arts was not accountable.

Three of the interview participants: Luzette, Dorothy and Matilda were quite animated when talking about what visual arts they had taught throughout the year and it was obvious that they were proud of the artworks their students had created. Dorothy, as a kindergarten teacher was interested in visual arts and encouraged her children everyday with their visual arts making and responding saying “so we draw every day, we do artwork every day”. She talked in depth about enabling her students to experience as much as they could with different art media as well as encouraging the children and accepting their artwork, she said that she did this to help build and develop their confidence when creating their artworks, she explained:

give them as many experiences of different media they can get their hands on, whether it's collage, printmaking, painting, mono-printing, and not just painting with brushes, we paint with ink, we paint with sparkly paint, we paint with puffy paint . . . it's just about exposing them to all those things.

Dorothy's explanation of her teaching showed a greater understanding of visual arts pedagogical content knowledge, which could be because of Dorothy's more extensive pre-service training in visual arts, as the literature suggests if GPSTs have had success in their own visual arts learning, they will be more likely to feel confident to teach it. In her survey answers Dorothy wrote that visual arts was “an integral part of my program and the way the children can communicate and express their ideas, even at an early age”, so she gives her students as many experiences in different visual arts media as possible. Dorothy was very passionate about ensuring her children could be creative and learn through experimentation, she would accept everything they created to promote success in visual arts. Dorothy believed that it was easier to do this at a kindergarten level because “it's all about exploring materials”, she also wanted to ensure the children's artworks were always their own, indicating that she once again understood the benefits of the process of making visual arts. She believed her children would gain more out of experimenting and remembering instructions when

creating their artworks, more so than if they were to receive one on one assistance to ensure their artworks looked of a higher standard. Dorothy described one scenario comparing her classes artworks to the kindergarten class next door which again displayed good pedagogical content knowledge: “you won’t go into our rooms and find twenty-four or the same things, but that’s where I’m passionate, so on the wall there, that’s their interpretation of tadpoles and froglets and frogs, and you just accept what they do, you want them to get success so they’ll have another go”.

Matilda said that she liked to integrate visual arts into other learning areas. She said that she often created lessons or unit plans which included visual arts activities. When her students learnt about a topic or did a book study, twice a week in the “rotational” activities her students were given the opportunity to learn through visual arts, she explained this in more detail by saying “so for example we just finished reading ‘Fantastic Mr Fox’, and that was an idea, you know draw and lets have a look at what he looks like and that type of thing. In some cases it’s a little hard to branch out and make a mask or something. But, I always try and have daily or if not at least twice a week”. Matilda said that they were also given the opportunity to learn some basic visual arts techniques, this explanation of how she teaches visual arts showed that the rotational activity time was the only time that visual arts activities were taught in her classroom. These data suggest that in these cases it appears that in the earlier grades the visual arts were included in all areas of student learning; however as they move through the grades visual arts was taught less frequently.

Lilly integrated visual arts into other subjects so her students still had the opportunity to make artworks, she tried to “cross it together as much as I can”. Both Matilda and Lilly integrated visual arts into other subjects. This differed from Luzette’s class because she said that she tried to teach as many discrete visual arts projects as possible with her class as well as integrating visual arts into other subjects. Her ability to teach visual arts both discretely and integrated into other learning areas could be attributed to her pre-service training, her survey responses showed that she completed her pre-

service training several years ago and had the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of visual arts media.

The five interview subjects said that they placed value on visual arts education, however none of them apart from Dorothy, used the appropriate curriculum document for visual arts at the year level that they taught. The interview subjects also indicated that they determined how much visual arts was taught, what it looked like and if it was actually taught. These perceptions display that what visual arts education is taught in Tasmanian primary schools is dependent on the teacher, the value they place on visual arts and their confidence. This is consistent with the literature, that most GPSTs focus on developing their skills in areas where they feel most comfortable as well as areas that have the most support at the school at which they teach (Bowell, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010).

4.5 Conclusion

From data collected several themes arose, it became evident that: there was a lack of accountability for visual arts teaching; GPST were responsible for how much and what visual arts they taught their students; there were varying views of the importance of visual arts education amongst GPST; visual arts was primarily integrated in with other subjects when taught; and that quality pre-service training, or a lack of, could affect the quality of the visual arts teaching program for a specific teacher.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated three research questions:

1. What visual arts practices do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers choose to include in their teaching?
2. What reasons do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers report regarding the extent to which they include visual arts in their teaching practice?
3. How do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of visual arts in their teaching practice?

Previous chapters have discussed the literature relevant to the study, outlined the methodologies used to conduct the research, analysed both qualitative (survey) and quantitative (survey and interview) data to find the themes which arose from the data, this chapter will present the findings of this study mapped against each research question and will make recommendations for further research in the area.

5.2 Research Question 1

What visual arts practices do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers choose to include in their teaching?

Through data collected from both survey and interview it was evident that Tasmanian GPST taught visual arts in a variety of ways. Some participants taught it as a discrete subject emphasising specific skills, techniques and processes as well as art theory; while others integrated their visual arts

teaching with other subjects. However, even though the subject was being taught, it was not being taught with due reference to the curriculum.

It was evident that in the early years of schooling, namely kindergarten to grade 2, visual arts was essential in the teaching and learning of these children, because it was through visual arts that they communicated what they were learning. The visual arts practices that teachers in kindergarten to grade 2 said that they included were more exploratory in nature; their students were learning through play as well as through observation. However, as students moved on into grades 3-6 the inclusion of visual arts in the classroom became less regular; some teachers had specific times when it would be taught, some chose to just teach it discretely while others would integrate it into other subjects.

The teachers in the upper primary grades tended to integrate visual arts, and used it as a way to help students gain a deeper understanding of a concept in a different subject, although some said that they included visual arts specific lessons where they taught some visual arts skills. When asked whether they used the visual arts curriculum to plan their lessons and ensure they are teaching relevant and necessary visual arts education throughout the year, none of the teachers who were interviewed said that they had looked at the curriculum document. These teachers said that they got their ideas from the internet, and would often choose areas of visual arts to teach that they felt more comfortable teaching and had a greater knowledge of.

It was evident that the visual arts practices Tasmanian GPSTs chose to include in their teaching was dependant on the individual teacher. The amount of visual arts teaching would depend on how much value they placed on the subject, what visual arts they taught would depend on what they felt confident teaching and what visual arts they knew how to teach. This study also showed that what visual arts practices Tasmanian GPSTs chose to include was also different depending on the grade the teacher taught.

5.3 Research Question 2

What reasons do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers report regarding the extent to which they include visual arts in their teaching practice?

Analysis of survey data indicated that the majority of respondents felt confident to teach visual arts. Those respondents who felt confident could also see the value of visual arts and taught it more regularly in their classroom. However, likewise those who did not feel confident to teach visual arts did not place as much value on it and did not teach it as often or at all in their classroom. Therefore, a major contributing factor on the extent to which GPSTs include visual arts in their teaching practice was individual confidence. Also clear from the survey data was that those who received what they referred to as adequate pre-service training felt more confident in their teaching. In effect this demonstrates that quality pre-service training influenced their confidence which in turn partly determines whether GPST would teach visual arts or not.

Through the analysis of interview data it was clear that those who had received more visual arts pre-service training displayed quality visual arts pedagogy. An analysis of the interview data also showed that GPSTs were not accountable for teaching visual arts in their classroom, which gave them the option to decide whether they would teach visual arts, what they would teach in regards to visual arts and how they would teach it.

5.4 Research Question 3

How do Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of visual arts in their teaching practice?

The analysis of survey data indicated that those participants who felt confident to teach visual arts, reported that their skill level in visual arts was good and that they had an average to high understanding of the visual arts curriculum, however when the interview participants were asked whether they used the visual arts curriculum none of them reported that they had ever looked at it.

Analysis of interview data indicated that positive visual arts experiences had a positive effect on their confidence in teaching in addition to their valuing of visual arts. Interview data elaborated on these experiences demonstrating that positive experiences at school, University level, outside of school and in their own classrooms positively influenced these participants. It could be suggested that these positive experiences had resulted in their valuing of the visual arts. However, the survey data showed that those who did not teach visual arts regularly were those who may not have received adequate visual arts pre-service training and did not possess the skills, knowledge or confidence to teach it, which is an issue of self-efficacy. If they felt confident to teach the subject they would teach it, however if they did not, due to the lack of accountability for visual arts, they could choose not to teach it, or just teach the areas of visual arts in which they felt most confident. Perhaps due to this lack of accountability participants did not use the curriculum to plan and implement visual arts in their classroom, the interview participants who taught between grades 3-6 all said that they used the internet for ideas and had not looked at the visual arts curriculum. This leads to the question how can quality visual arts education be taught without reference to the curriculum document?

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Having established that due to a lack of accountability for visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools, GPSTs are not trained adequately to teach visual arts in their classrooms, which is affecting the quality of visual arts education for Tasmanian primary school students. Therefore, recommendations for further research in this area essentially relate to the limitations of this study – a

Master of Education by coursework. A longitudinal study of Tasmanian primary school children is one future direction with merit. This may involve following students and their experience of visual arts over a period of time. Future research may also focus on the teaching of visual arts in the classrooms of Tasmanian GPSTs to determine if the findings of this study are replicated more broadly. Further study into the pre-service training of teachers is also a possible future direction.

5.5 Conclusion

Visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools as perceived by GPSTs is taught by those who place value on visual arts education and feel confident teaching it, this was attributed to the following factors including; previous positive experiences teaching the subject, quality pre-service training, or growing up with positive experiences in visual arts. Due to a lack of accountability for visual arts education, teachers who did not feel confident or had not had positive experiences with visual arts chose not to teach it. Data suggested a lack of accountability for visual arts education in Tasmanian primary schools that allowed GPSTs to choose whether or not they would teach visual arts in their classroom. It also allowed them to choose what visual arts they would teach and how they would teach it. This study has found that there was a lack of any active in-school support for teachers to develop their visual arts knowledge and skills or to help those who did not feel confident or competent teaching visual arts.

It was also evident through data collected that GPSTs in Tasmania who received quality pre-service visual arts education placed more value on visual arts and described a better understanding of visual arts pedagogy. Extensive literature reports the value of visual arts education for primary school children, however in Tasmanian primary schools it is up to the individual teacher whether they will teach visual arts in their classroom.

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Appendix A Draft Survey

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a study of visual art teaching in Tasmanian primary schools.

This study will look at what reasons Tasmanian primary teachers report regarding the extent to which they include Visual Art in their teaching practice; how Tasmanian primary teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of Visual Art in their teaching practice; and, what Visual Art practices Tasmanian primary teachers choose to include in their teaching. This research is student research and will be conducted in partial fulfillment of a Master of Education degree for Sarah Brooke under the supervision of Dr William Baker, who is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education in the University of Tasmania.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of what visual art is being taught in Tasmanian primary schools. While also exploring how confident Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers feel about teaching this subject and whether they feel they are adequately trained. This will enable further research to be conducted depending on the outcome of the study to ensure primary school teachers are confident and adequately trained and supported to teach visual art in their classrooms.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this survey and a potential follow up interview because you are a generalist primary school teacher in Tasmania. Your involvement is voluntary, and there are no consequences if you decide not to participate and this will not affect your relationship with the University.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to answer questions in a 15 minute survey on Survey Monkey and possibly in one 30 minute interview with the researcher, where you will be asked to elaborate on why you have answered the way you have and to perhaps share examples of your practice. These questions will include such things as, 'Do you find there is enough time to teach visual art in your classrooms?' 'What are the benefits you believe visual art teaches students?' and 'Do you feel confident to teach visual art?'. Surveys will take place online using the Survey Monkey program. Interviews will take place online OR at a location nominated by you. Interviews will be recorded for transcription and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to approve.

Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

The potential benefits for students and teachers include a greater understanding of primary educators' confidence in teaching Visual Art in their classrooms, and hence the potential for improved outcomes for their students.

Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks for this study. There is a small risk that your data may be re-identifiable in subsequent publications. To overcome this possibility identifying data will be removed and pseudonyms applied.

What if I change my mind during or after the study?

You are free to withdraw at any time throughout the study without providing an explanation. If you do choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be removed and will not be used (except in the case of survey data which may not be able to be separated once the survey is complete).

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

The raw data will be kept on a university password protected computer in the researcher's office on campus and will be destroyed after five years. The data will be treated in a confidential manner.

How will the results of the study be published?

Findings from this research will be published in academic journals and will be presented at education conferences; furthermore the results shall be disseminated to the participants, the Tasmanian Department of Education, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools Tasmania. Formal presentations will happily be made to the teaching staff of these stakeholders in the form of PL if requested. You will not be identifiable in the publication results.

What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about the study you can call the following people

Sarah Brooke (Student) Mob. 0437686238. sarah.brooke@education.tas.gov.au

Dr William Baker (Supervisor) (03) 6324 3407 Bill.Baker@utas.edu.au

Or you can contact the following:

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H13394].

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Sarah Brooke: Teacher Penguin High School. sarah.brooke@education.tas.gov.au

Dr Bill Baker: Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania. Bill.Baker@utas.edu.au

- ☐ **I agree**
- ☐ **I do not agree**

To Screen:

- ☐ **I do not agree**

Thank you for considering this survey.

To Screen:

☐ **I do agree**

Consent for Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers

I agree to take part in the research study named above.

I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this study.

The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

I understand that the study involves me participating in a short 10 minute survey on the Survey Monkey.

I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risk. However, I understand that there is a small risk that your data may be re-identifiable in subsequent publications.

I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed.

Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I cannot be identified as a participant.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.

I understand that I will not be able to withdraw my data after completing the survey as it cannot be aggregated.

☐ **I agree**

☐ **I do not agree**

To Screen:

☐ **I do not agree**

Thank you for considering this survey.

To Screen:

- ☐ **I do agree**

About you

1. Gender
 - ☐ I am male
 - ☐ I am female
2. My age is
 - ☐ 21-30
 - ☐ 31-40
 - ☐ 41-50
 - ☐ 51-60
 - ☐ Over 60
3. How long have you been teaching?
 - ☐ Less than 5 years
 - ☐ Less than 10 years
 - ☐ 11-20 years
 - ☐ 21-30 years
 - ☐ In excess of 30 years
4. I teach
 - ☐ Birth- Kindergarten
 - ☐ Prep-Grade 2
 - ☐ Grade 3 – Grade 4
 - ☐ Grade 5 – Grade 6
5. My location
 - ☐ Southern Tasmania
 - ☐ Northern Tasmania
 - ☐ North West Tasmania
 - ☐ West Coast Tasmania
 - ☐ East Coast Tasmania

Visual Art in my teaching practice

1. Please select the response that best describes the regularity of visual art in your teaching practice (please select one only). On average:
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom every day.
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom most days in the week.
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom several times a week.
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom around once a week.
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom occasionally.
 - ☐ I include visual art in my classroom rarely.
 - ☐ I don't include visual art in my classroom.
2. How do you approach the inclusion of visual art in your classroom?
 - ☐ I don't teach visual art in my classroom.
 - ☐ I integrate visual art into other curriculum areas (such as Maths or Literacy).
 - ☐ I teach visual art as a separate (discrete) learning area.

☐ Other (please explain)

3. How important is visual art within your teaching practice?

Essential	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Unnecessary
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Please explain your response.

4. Please select the response that best describes your pre-service training in visual art education (please select as many as are appropriate).

- ☐ I did not complete any pre-service training in visual art in my Education Degree
- ☐ I completed some visual art training in my Education Degree
- ☐ I completed 1 visual art unit in my Education Degree
- ☐ I completed 2 or more visual art units in my Education Degree
- ☐ I have completed a Visual Art Diploma
- ☐ I have completed a Visual Art degree
- ☐ I only experienced visual art training on my practicum (professional experience).
- ☐ Other (please explain).

5. Do you think your pre-service training prepared you to teach visual art in your classroom?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why?

Confidence and Skills

6. How do you rate your confidence to teach visual art in your classroom?

Extremely Confident	Confident	I get by	I lack confidence	I have no confidence
---------------------	-----------	----------	-------------------	----------------------

7. How do you rate your visual art skills?

Extremely Good	Good	Average	Poor	Extremely Poor
----------------	------	---------	------	----------------

8. How do you rate your knowledge of the visual art curriculum?

Extremely High	High	Average	Poor	Extremely Poor
----------------	------	---------	------	----------------

9. Would you like to further develop your skills and knowledge of visual art?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Please explain your response.

Support and Training

10. How would you rate the support provided by your school to implement visual art in your teaching practice?

Very well supported	Supported	Some support	Not actively supported	Discouraged
---------------------	-----------	--------------	------------------------	-------------

Please explain your response.

11. As a teacher have you taken part in any visual art professional development?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Was this helpful?

I am willing to participate in a 30 minute interview about visual art in my teaching practice.

- ☐ **I agree**
☐ **I do not agree**

To Screen:

- ☐ **I agree**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview. Please complete the information below and you will be contacted to organise a suitable date, time and location for this to take place. Interview slots are limited. In the event that interviews are oversubscribed you will also be contacted to thank you for your participation.

First Name

Second Name

School

Telephone contact

Email contact

To Screen:

- ☐ **I do not agree**

Thank you for completing this survey. This concludes your participation.

Appendix B Invitation for teachers to participate in survey for Email and DoE Infostream.

Hi,

You are invited to participate in a study of visual art teaching in Tasmanian primary schools.

This study will investigate what reasons Tasmanian primary teachers report regarding the extent to which they include Visual Arts in their teaching practice; how Tasmanian primary teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of Visual Arts in their teaching practice; and what Visual Arts practices Tasmanian primary teachers choose to include in their teaching.

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of what Visual Art is being taught in Tasmanian primary schools, whilst exploring how confident Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers are about teaching this subject and whether they feel they are adequately trained.

You have been invited to participate in this survey and possibly follow up interviews because you are a generalist primary school teacher in Tasmania.

As part of this study you will be asked to answer questions in a 15 minute survey on Survey Monkey and you can also choose to participate in one 30 minute interview with the researcher, where you will be asked to elaborate on why you have answered the way you have and to even share examples of your practice. These questions will include such things as, 'Do you find there is enough time to teach visual art in your classrooms?' 'What are the benefits you believe visual art teaches students?' 'Do you feel confident to teach visual art?'.

Further details and a request for your consent are included in the survey, and if you would like to participate all you need do is follow the link below to the survey monkey website to complete the online survey.

To access the survey please click on the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KJYRQJX>

Thank you so much for considering this request,

Sarah Brooke (student researcher)

Dr Bill Baker (supervisor)

Appendix C Invitation to participate in Interview

Invitation

You have been invited to participate in a study of visual art teaching in Tasmanian primary schools.

This study will look at what reasons Tasmanian primary teachers report regarding the extent to which they include Visual Art in their teaching practice; how Tasmanian primary teachers express their confidence and competence regarding their use of Visual Art in their teaching practice; and, what Visual Art practices Tasmanian primary teachers choose to include in their teaching. This research is student research and will be conducted in partial fulfillment of a Master of Education degree for Sarah Brooke under the supervision of Dr William Baker, who is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education in the University of Tasmania.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of what visual art is being taught in Tasmanian primary schools. While also exploring how confident Tasmanian generalist primary school teachers feel about teaching this subject and whether they feel they are adequately trained. This will enable further research to be conducted depending on the outcome of the study to ensure primary school teachers are confident and adequately trained and supported to teach visual art in their classrooms.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this survey and a potential follow up interview because you are a generalist primary school teacher in Tasmania. Your involvement is voluntary, and there are no consequences if you decide not to participate and this will not affect your relationship with the University.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in one 30 minute interview with the researcher, where you will be asked to elaborate on why you have answered the way you have and to perhaps share examples of your practice. These questions will include such things as, 'Do you find there is enough time to teach visual art in your classrooms?' 'What are the benefits you believe visual art teaches students?' and 'Do you feel confident to teach visual art?'. Interviews will take place online OR at a location nominated by you. Interviews will be recorded for transcription and you will be provided with a copy of the transcript to approve.

Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?

The potential benefits for students and teachers include a greater understanding of primary educators' confidence in teaching Visual Art in their classrooms, and hence the potential for improved outcomes for their students.

Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks for this study. There is a small risk that your data may be re-identifiable in subsequent publications. To overcome this possibility identifying data will be removed and pseudonyms applied.

What if I change my mind during or after the study?

You are free to withdraw at any time throughout the study without providing an explanation. If you do choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be removed and will not be used (except in the case of survey data which may not be able to be separated once the survey is complete).

What will happen to the information when this study is over?

The raw data will be kept on a university password protected computer in the researcher's office on campus and will be destroyed after five years. The data will be treated in a confidential manner.

How will the results of the study be published?

Findings from this research will be published in academic journals and will be presented at education conferences; furthermore the results shall be disseminated to the participants, the Tasmanian Department of Education, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools Tasmania. Formal presentations will happily be made to the teaching staff of these stakeholders in the form of PL if requested. You will not be identifiable in the publication results.

What if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about the study you can call the following people

Sarah Brooke (Student) Mob. 0437686238. sarah.brooke@education.tas.gov.au

Dr William Baker (Supervisor) (03) 6324 3407 Bill.Baker@utas.edu.au

Or you can contact the following:

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H13394].

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Sarah Brooke: Teacher Penguin High School

Dr Bill Baker: Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania.

Appendix D DRAFT Interview Schedule

1. What role has visual art played in your life?
Follow-up/prompt: Memories of primary education and visual art?
Follow-up/prompt: What about during your childhood?
Follow-up/prompt: Now?
2. Tell me about your University pre-service teacher training?
Follow-up/prompt: What classes did you do?
Follow-up/prompt: How many hours do you think you had all up?
Follow-up/prompt: Did it prepare you to teach visual art adequately?
Follow-up/prompt: Did you come away from your pre-service teacher training feeling confident to teach visual art in your classroom?
3. Tell me a little about your teaching practice?
Follow-up/prompt: How long have you been teaching?
Follow-up/prompt: What grades do you teach?
Follow-up/prompt: Do you include visual arts?
Follow-up/prompt: What types of visual arts lessons do you teach?
Follow-up/prompt: Why do you include visual art in your practice?
4. Do you enjoy teaching visual art in your classroom?
Follow-up/prompt: Why?
Follow-up/prompt: Why not?
5. How often do you teach visual art in your classroom?
Follow-up/prompt: Do you believe that is enough?
Follow-up/prompt: Would you like to spend more/less time teaching visual art in your classroom?
Follow-up/prompt: Do you have access to the appropriate resources (i.e. paint, clay etc.) to teach visual art effectively?
6. Tell me about what visual art you do in your classroom?
Follow-up/prompt: Is this based on the Curriculum?
Follow-up/prompt: Do you teach visual art discretely or do you integrate it?
Follow-up/prompt: How often would this happen?
Follow-up/prompt: Is it easy to find ideas and resources to teach?
7. Have you taken part in any professional development in visual art since you started teaching?
Follow-up/prompt: What was involved in the professional development?
Follow-up/prompt: Would you regard the professional development as useful to your practice?
8. Do you think visual art is valued as a part of the curriculum at your school?
Follow-up/prompt: Is visual art teaching within your classroom encouraged within your school?
Follow-up/prompt: Is support available in your school to help you develop your skills and knowledge of visual art teaching?

Appendix E Interview Transcripts

All names have been changed for privacy purposes.

Matilda Interview 25th November 2013

SB- what role has visual art played in your life?

MB-C- always, it was always visual arts, my mum is an artist, she actually paints, so from a little tiny person, you know, we were always encouraged to be drawing and colouring in, and I used to go out with mum and do little bits and pieces, so you know, always.

SB- what about when you were at primary school?

MB-C- well at primary school it wasn't too bad, cause I went to a really small school, and even when we went to high school that was really excellent too, cause there were only 50 of us at the high school so we did. I had a couple of great art teachers, you know, really different stuff! Like making giant sized masks, and stuff like that, so you know visual arts was always important at my school, and also I think it's an era, you know back when I went to school (I graduated 30 years ago) it was still really important, everybody had an art department, it wasn't just this fit it in to your curriculum. It's to the side, it's not seen as... what happens to the people who can only learn visually through expressing themselves artistically? It's amazing the number of kids I've got in here, especially one little girl, if I let her colour it in first and make it pretty the work will continue, if it looks nice, then she'll do the work and the work will be fine. I just have to give her the time.

SB- ok, so about your pre-service training, in the survey you said that you didn't have any visual arts classes?

MB-C- no, because I did a grad dip, cause I did a 12 month course to become a teacher because I already had a masters prior to this and so I never did that in my political career. So no, there wasn't anything, no not at all. So for a 12 month... maybe you'd touch on it a bit if it was a 2 year course, but we were just left to your own devices so I think you're either artistic or you're not.

SB- so what did they cover in the course?

MB-C- in my course itself I did everything that most of the four year ones did in a lot shorter time, so they had 6 months to do each, like behaviour management for 6 months and they'll do literacy and numeracy for 6 months. Well I had two weeks, it was in a two week structure, my 12 months I had 12 weeks of prac. It was so basic.

SB- you mentioned in the survey as well, that it depends on the teacher and the type of degree

MB-C- and that's it you get a teacher, and I think when I went to school and even at university now I would assume that the teachers that are really passionate are either extremely artistic people and those type of people probably wouldn't go into the university stream anyway, or you would be a more mature person that still had that passion and drive.

SB- you have explained a little why you feel confident to teach visual arts...

MB-C- and now it's ipads, you know everything is so accessible, like pinterest that's just been a lifesaver for teachers, and the fact that I can have a teacher in the USA who I just love and I can go

onto her website all the time and see how she's done something and download it and do it myself. And I think that's the key to it now, it's just so much more accessible. It's just so much easier even if you have no artistic ability, like there's one or two teachers that are here in this school and I'm going to team up with one for Christmas because she has no, (she'll tell you straight out) she has no artistic ability, the fact that she can't even fold paper. So I'm team teaching with her this Christmas just to do all the Christmas stuff, cause she just can't do it.

SB- and I'm sure she'd have things to offer you as well

MB-C- yeah she does.

SB- so a little about your teaching practice, how do you integrate it into you other subjects, because I'm pretty sure in your survey you said you integrate it?

MB-C- yeah basically what I try to do is we have rotational things, on a Tuesday and Friday, so in that middle block I have rotational activities, so I try very hard to make one of them an art activity of some sort. So for example we just finished reading 'Fantastic Mr Fox', and that was an idea, you know draw and lets have a look at what he looks like and that type of thing. In some cases it's a little hard to branch out and make a mask or something. But, I always try and have daily or if not at least twice a week, we have sketching class and at the moment we are into Egypt and I have got all the Egyptian things in my room, and they can draw them and look at all the bits and pieces and my main aim is during that rotational to give them something that they can look at that is a little bit different that they can try to do. Like, we are making papier mache chicken heads at the moment, that's in the rotational activity, that's about all the time we get, but now coming up to Christmas I'm really hoping those last two weeks will be let's just go and do some clay work, and you know, just stuff that they normally wouldn't get a chance to do.

SB- when you're doing your art activities is it based on the curriculum?

MB-C- to be really honest, this is my first class; prior to this I've just been doing relief. So that's been great cause I've been able to do whatever and I've been able to do lots of art, but I haven't even looked at the curriculum for art and how bad is that! And I think, well do they have a curriculum and obviously they do, and who looks at it cause who has time to make it, because it's not accountable you know you don't have to tick on it or flick on it. To me the fact that a child is artistic it means so much above anything else, and you're talking visual arts, but people don't realise the kids that are visually good at art can often sing and are musical and have all those other abilities as well, but they're not fostered because they don't know. But yeah, no I haven't and that's the sad thing. Things like the basic colour wheel and things like that I think they're critical, and most people pull that from their memory somewhere if you can't, look it up, and teaching that sort of stuff, but they wouldn't be taught that in primary school. I haven't seen it in my travels.

SB- you obviously enjoy teaching visual arts in your classroom

MB-C- yep

SB- while doing relief have you taught a lot of different grades?

MB-C- yeah primary I have taught all grades

SB- have you taken part in any pd to do with visual arts?

MB-C- nup

SB- have you ever seen any on offer?

MB-C- nup, there's been one or two, where they've said you could do this or that to use art in your classroom more and I've looked at it and they don't look as though they would help me, and it's not that it's not encouraged, it's just not advertised.

SB- so if there was pd for visual arts out there, what would you want from it?

MB-C- how to use it more in the class, if you're not going to have an art teacher, if you haven't got a specific art department, how can just a normal everyday teacher fit it in to their curriculum and to me that would help me as well, but I've seen the amount of effort it takes some teachers to organise just one art activity. And if teachers could be taught how to do it on a really simple easy basis that would be great, you know, 'here's a couple of ideas...'

SB- do you think that art is valued here as part of the curriculum?

MB-C- no. I think, that's hard. I think some of the individual, like the prep teachers particularly, will do a lot of that sort of thing and the grade one teachers will do a lot, but I don't think overall it's valued as something that's so amazing, when it can be the be all and end all of some children's lives. And that can be the only way that they learn, and obviously you're always going to have teachers who like to branch out and do whatever. But I don't think it's... and the bits and pieces you do see around come from one or two classrooms. But I don't think as a whole we could go wrong really encouraging it. And I think looking the schools I have been in that's a general thing, and I've been in quite a few. But I think you know visually, if kids can come in and see their works of art no matter what they look like. And I've been doing a teach the class activity and so many of the kids have chosen how to draw things, so they are teaching the class how to draw things like Pokémon, or a giraffe, or whatever they've chosen. My husband tells the story about how is high school art teacher in grade 8 told him he was shocking and that he would never amount to anything in the artist world, and he will tell you the words this particular teacher told him, and he said because of this he's never had any passion for it and I just think you can't do that to a kid. No matter how old you are even if you truly are bad at it!

SB- and just one more thing, you said in your survey that you have some support here for resources from leadership encouraging it?

MB-C- yeah so there is some support, and at least I know I can buy resources and there's been enough money in my budget to be able to buy and I think really because there is no clear guideline on it you just get what you need or what you want. Whether that is support or not! But, it would be nice if the school sort of harnessed some of the amazing artists we have in Tasmania. For example we did that book folding course with a gentleman called Richard, now he's willing to come to schools.

Dorothy Interview 26th November 2013

SB- throughout your life what roles did visual art play?

DL- I really don't remember much in primary school only that my grade 1 art teacher, was horrible and she smacked me one day for drawing sky on my page, and see that's a memory I have and that's so sad isn't it? Other memories I have, we were allowed to draw at home, we had our own paints at home, you're talking a long time ago! Not a lot of craft went on at our house; mum did a lot of sewing but not a lot of other things. So primary school I don't really remember, I was better at English than painting and anything. High school I had a really good art teacher, and she's in Launceston and she sometimes does study tours overseas now to Italy and stuff like that, she's amazing, she was actually my sisters art teacher as well and she was at Grammar and they've got a special school or something of arts with a lot of money, she inspired me to do all sorts of different types of things, different to drawing and painting, printmaking and all sorts of stuff at high school.

SB- so did you study visual arts all through high school?

DL- after grade 7 into grade 8 you were allowed to choose, and I chose French, Home Arts which was cooking and sewing and Art. And Art was my favourite, French wasn't and then, in those days you could do clerical, and then when I went past grade 10 to grade 11 and 12 to Matrix in those days I chose to do Art as well as one of my majors and I had a friend who I met there and at the end of the year you chose a couple of areas to do, so I chose ceramics and clay and I did print making and I made these big clay balls. So you made them over moulds and put them all together and then we suspended them so we each had an area to display and so mine were balls and plus I did printmaking and down in Launceston where I trained, down where the Penny Royal is now that was just a quarry and we used to go there and draw and paint there, I guess cause the Launceston College was quite close, and the river was there, and so then when we went to college (it was college in those days... uni), we had two wonderful education lecturers in Art; Edward Broomhall and Terry Woodward and they were inspiring, absolutely inspiring, so I did my fourth year, we used to have a little education project which is like a thesis and I did mine on direct experience in art with children, so when I did my fourth year prac, we had about a term that we got to do it, and we did it with another teacher, but what you did was you went and took over the class and the teacher left, we changed everything, and we did this whole project on... we did actually trees. You know mandala's the world wide is the same children draw them, and trees are exactly the same so I did a study on trees so we went to Holly Bank, and we went to a forest and we went to sorts of places and we looked at trees and when we came back and they made the trees and then you looked at trees from African children they were exactly the same the way they draw them, and I found that very interesting. So that's where my background's come, and so now I'm a teacher it's just part of my program, and it's the most important part particularly with this age, but I'm fairly passionate about it, as you can see, but I'm not an artist but I don't pretend to be, and all through college and uni I did printmaking, so I did etching and I wasn't very good at sculpture and yeah, so that's what my area was in, we didn't have to write a lot of history stuff cause it wasn't a major, we only had to do two majors.

SB- ok, so the two lecturers Edward and Terry, that you were talking about before what did they do that inspired you so much?

DL- they exposed us to all sorts of different things that I hadn't been exposed to beforehand, even when I had done art in year 11 and 12, things like photograms, when you put a leaf or something on and you put it on that special paper, you know what I mean?

SB- yes

DL- and all those sorts of things, and using natural stuff, mostly lots of natural stuff, and Edward Broomhall he had kept folders of his own children's work from babies through to however old they were, they were probably in their teens when he taught me and I kept my first child's work til primary school and then I got all their folders and stuff from school. But, stuff that he would have done with them which was so inspiring, lots of drawing, drawing from natural things from real life taking them out, so the direct experience, so taking them to see things, you know like instead of saying draw a cow- taking them to see a cow or bringing a cow in, so that, bringing nature in. So if you say to a child now go draw me a tree, well why wouldn't you go out the door and draw and paint the kinder tree, and on the other hand, I think that little children communicate through drawing, cause they can't write, so they draw and you sometimes have to teach them to draw, you so what does your head look like? So you get a mirror, or I get a photo of them beside them, and say have a look, where are your eyes? Cause the eyes will be up here, and the circle, you usually get a head and the arms will come off the bodies, beautiful drawings, I'll show you. We do a self-portrait to start the year and end the year. They draw for everything, they draw maps, they just draw to communicate their ideas, how else can you get them across? Some don't like to draw, but you hope that you foster that love of drawing in them.

SB- going back to your lecturers, did they actually link what they were teaching you to the curriculum?

DL- yep

SB- did they teach you things and then go, this is how it is linked to the curriculum?

DL- they were teaching us things to teach to children, so they were the art educators, they were both educators themselves, and had been teachers, also Terry Woodward because he knew we were interested in art we did a program, we ran a holiday program in our semester break we ran a program and got kids to come in and we set up activities, we had drawing and a spinning wheel and we had a model with an old fashioned dress on, we had lamps, we had charcoal, so then a group would go over to the quarry with a teacher and sketch over there, we had art based play which was good practice for us because we were learning to be teachers so we did that one holidays, another thing we did was a friend and I we organised an art holiday program so we went round and collected all the materials we could get so we did things like collage and stuff like that as well, but they would have been linked to the curriculum of the time, but at uni it was something that, it wasn't just worksheets, it wasn't just, you know.

SB- so do you think that because it was so practical it built your confidence up?

DL- yeah, but I'm not an artist, I can draw a little bit, you ask the kids here, I tell them your drawing will be better than mine, I mean I'll show them the process and what to do and you just accept what they do, probably a little bit, it inspired me more than made me confident, within my own art cause I'd already done a bit of my own stuff when I was in year 11 and 12 and through uni, but I could never be, I was just interested in it really. You just have to be a bit passionate about it and like it and not feel that it is too hard. Some of the stuff that goes up along this corridor is amazing what they do up there. So it's amazing what they do, ours is pretty basic but we did have an art exhibition for our playgroup, it's just mounting the stuff and finding the time to do all that, but that's alright and we gave out invitations and we invited people to open it and stuff like that.

SB- you said that you integrate visual art, so how often do you do this?

DL- everyday, I'll set up at least two art activities, plus there's probably a drawing one going on outside or whatever, so it's just what we kinder teachers do, we don't do colouring in. But every day it will be and I think at this level two, these a four year olds, give them as many experiences of different media they can get their hands on, whether its collage, printmaking, painting, mono-printing, and not just painting with brushes, we paint with ink, we paint with sparkly paint, we paint with puffy paint, so it's just about exposing them to all those things and I don't say, right you've got to paint this, just letting them have some experimental time for us in kinder, sometimes we might bring in a flower, or someone might bring in a dinosaur or something and they'll have a go at doing that, so every day there are at least two art activities going on in my room and it's the same next door, and you won't go into our rooms and find twenty-four or the same things, but that's where I'm passionate, so on the wall there, that's their interpretation of tadpoles and froglets and frogs, and you just accept what they do, you want them to get success so they'll have another go, so when they get to prep the teacher will say, we're going to draw this today and they won't say no, you've given them that push, everything they do we accept. I know when they get up to grade's 3 and 4 they have to do a lot more writing and sitting, they lose that wonderment I think, and a lot of teachers say they hate art, but it doesn't have to turn out perfect, isn't it the process, not the end product? I think it's easy for us, cause it's all about exploring materials a lot of it is, and also we say, look a little, draw a little, those sorts of things, we've got beautiful photos of them outside around the tree with their easel's lined up painting, we've got beautiful photos of them out their painting in autumn. But I think those two lecturers made me realise how important it is to give kids direct experience, particularly if you're teaching in a disadvantaged area as well. And if parents come into my room, I always say, please don't draw for them, please let them have a go first and if they're struggling then come and tell me, cause I sometimes say, well I'll draw the head and you draw the body, or how many arms has it got and now they do their own. So accepting what they do is what we do.

SB- when you are talking about the direct experiences, for this age do you think that art is the best way for them to represent what they've learnt about?

DL- yeah, but also, we will look at new things that way, and their artworks from these experiences won't turn out exactly like the object or whatever, but they will all be similar, we get some parents say that their children are no good at art, so I show them, you know I say, have a look at these, and they say oh! They're alright. So her perception of drawing and my perception of drawing are probably different, I think they're gorgeous, I think those drawings are just beautiful. But also, sometimes I'll say draw with something, in their journals, so it doesn't always have to be direct experience. But that helps with their drawing. So we draw every day, we do artwork every day.

SB- well, last question, would be about professional development, and have you participated in any?

DL- yeah, I've been to some of the Zart Art ones, I find those, they're not bad for ideas, but they get you to make something, but some of the things I could use at this level and just get the kids to do it. One year we made angels, well their angels looked like they'd done them! And that's what I say, the clay faces that my children had done were a little different from the next class, because she sat one on one with them, and I just gave them the clay and showed them how to attach the clay so the eyes wouldn't fall off, and I said to someone, you can tell that my kids made theirs, and that's important to me that they've done it. You can show them how to do it, so yeah, mine are all you've got to see that they've done it. But I'm not a really neat and tidy person, my work isn't that neat and tidy. The other professional development I've done I've been to, a lady here, the one who's in charge of the art

supplies, she has run a couple of workshops, and she gave us good printmaking ideas, and she got a local artists to come along and show us some watercolours. But some good things like meat tray printing, and collographs, we don't throw anything out here, so we have a lot of things we can use for resources.

SB- it sounds like you've had some good professional development, so what do you think is the best, if you were to go to any more visual art pd, what would you want to get out of it the most?

DL- I'm still open to ideas, and I love looking through catalogues for materials that are available, but they're way out of our budget, you can buy one and we have to share, I don't really need to go and make something, I just like to go and look at the ideas, I don't know whether it's ideas and different things that teachers do with children with art. And books with ideas, this is what I'm into, not going to Zart Art and learning how to, so probably artists than learning how to do a particular thing.

SB- do you think that visual arts is supported here?

DL- I think it is, I do think it is valued here, well you only have to go up the corridors here, but once that teacher goes, and I go. If you don't have someone who is passionate to keep doing it you know.

SB- with the support and resources is everything fine?

DL- yeah, it is at the moment and we get all the paper that we need, I noticed there wasn't anything left in the art budget, to buy anything for the end of the year, but that's alright, we've got stashes and so sometimes you've just got to borrow some. But I don't know what the art budget is like. There are still resources in the art storeroom.

SB- how to senior staff support?

DL- I dunno, I think the budget has always been there but I don't know what will happen now, well we have a new principal so I don't know, but other senior staff have been ok. I think they value it as an important part of education, I mean there's an art curriculum isn't there! So there should be! Our early years framework is all about the child so it's just in there, it's part of their whole development and the whole curriculum.

Isaac Interview 27th November 2013

IP- I feel confident because I love doing it. I think I feel confident teaching anything that I love doing.

SB- So, you really think that if you are confident that you will be quite happy to teach the subject?

IP- Yeah, I think it teachers are exposed to it more, they get more confident

SB- Do you think that teachers need more time to be exposed to those things?

IP- Yeah definitely, especially when you consider the way they use art usually in the curriculum is as a gap filler, where as they don't see the advantage, like for example I just did a chemistry unit and I got the kids all to create chalk chemical compounds and because they were pieces of art and they were a part of the process they understood what they were doing a lot more in their chemistry work so I think that's a thing that they need to teach, how to use the integration of arts into other areas of the curriculum.

SB- So, you said that you actually teach art as a separate learning area as well as integrated, so obviously you've just spoken a little bit about integration, but how do you teach it as a separate subject?

IP- I teach a lot of the specialist artists and styles like cubism and surrealism and stuff like that, and, which look my whole teaching is pretty well integrated anyway because, also that incorporates the history of it all, which also then, suddenly you've got a conversation about what was happening in socially at the time, so you can't actually teach it properly without it being integrated. But I do teach it as just techniques and stuff as well.

SB- Your technique teachings and those sort of things, are they based on the visual art curriculum?

IP- They're mainly based upon, well because the art curriculum doesn't exist yet, the national one anyway, so I've got that basically off watching lots of videos on it on Youtube.

SB- So you haven't bothered to look at the Tasmanian Curriculum?

IP- Um, no because it was too basic I suppose for what was going on in primary school and I always try and hit a lot higher.

SB- Do you find it easy to teach visual art and find ideas on how to teach it?

IP- Oh yeah, very easy.

SB- So, do you come up with your own lessons or do you find things online or in books and things like that?

IP- I've got a lot of ideas in my head already, but I also find quite a few things online and things like pintrest have great ones, and just googling to get ideas.

SB- ok, you've sort of touched on this already, but specifically why do you include visual arts in your teaching?

IP- Because I understand how different minds work and I see that it's also therapeutic, its relaxing, and a lot of the learning that can take place can be subconscious and also it helps understand concepts that are too abstract to put into words.

SB- So, I think I know the answer to this, but do you actually enjoy teaching visual arts in your classroom?

IP- Of course, I love it, if I could be just an art teacher I would.

SB- so why is that, is it because it's fun, or is it for other reasons?

IP- I guess fun's got a big part of it, be it's, yeah I don't know, it's great to see kids getting off on it and also I think a lot of the art that is taught unless it is by a specialist teacher, so they don't actually understand what they're doing, and I like to sort of you know, if you're doing lines you use a graphite pencil and you show how you use it in ten different ways to get different effects and suddenly it opens up their world to expressing themselves.

SB- that's wonderful. Now, you said in your survey that you include visual art in your classroom every day so obviously you said that you integrate it, but is there a particular time of day that you like to teach it or just whenever it is appropriate?

IP- no, any given moment I feel like it, if I see a kids getting bored or switch off, or you know if it's the best way to describe something then we will go down that road.

SB- you said that you haven't taken part in professional development for visual art, is there a reason for this?

IP- Yep, schools don't pay for that, they don't place the value on it so.

SB- Ok, so that's what you finding at your school, you're not seeing people place value on visual art?

IP- yeah, definitely

SB- So, is that coming from senior staff, or other areas?

IP- ah yes, senior staff.

SB- ok, so what are they valuing?

IP- Ah, numeracy and literacy, pretty well and I work at a catholic school so they really value religious education.

SB- What about other staff in the school, is there a push for visual arts from them?

IP- Ah, as a whole I think most of them just do it as a token thing to make their 'ROD's (records of development) look good.

SB- Fair enough

IP- there's not actually much teaching going on, if that makes any sense, in that area. It's more a case of this looks nice, lets copy it, which is ok, if it's yeah.

SB- One last thing, if there was professional development available and the school was to fund it, would you actually like to take part in any?

IP- definitely.

SB- ok, and what you actually want to get out of it?

IP- I would like to see new ways of using multimedia art as well because that makes it more affordable for a lot of schools who don't value spending money on art equipment, but in saying that, I would like to see PD that was actually aimed at senior staff to get them to see that art is a valuable thing in school, and with professionals that can support the development of arts learning areas, I know they do that with music, but not with visual arts really.

SB- ok, and just quickly, when you were talking about resources, do you actually have enough resources?

IP- I do, cause I spend nearly all my budget on art equipment, but the problem is, everyone then borrows it from my classroom.

Lilly Interview 27th November

SB- Ok, if you're happy we'll get started. First question is, what roll has visual art played in your life, so things like memories from before school or in primary school or in primary school or those sorts of things?

LB- um, that's a hard question.

SB- did you have much art at all through primary school?

LB- not that I can remember, no. Yeah, no, I can't really think of anything that stands out in primary school as far as art goes.

SB- what about when you were at home, did you do any art activities at home?

LB- I would have done with mum, mum is quite good at painting, as is my older brother, me not so much, but yeah I would have done oh like you know, arty craft stuff with mum.

SB- what about now, do you create any artworks, or go to art exhibitions or anything like that?

LB- I go to art galleries quite often, but as for producing art myself, no.

SB- Ok, next question is a little bit about when you were at university, so said that you completed one visual art unit, why was that, was it because it was part of the course, did you choose that unit, or how did it all sort of work?

LB- I did a visual art unit, I did two years at Griffiths in Queensland and art was a pre-requisite for the subject, like you actually had to do it, and that was really good, when I can back to Tassie, I did my last two years and there weren't any art subjects that I had to do, but the uni told me I'd done too much maths, and so I didn't have to do any maths in third year and they made me pick some electives and I picked sculpture as an elective.

SB- Ok, how do you think this prepared you to teach visual arts?

LB- I guess the one when I was at Griffiths that went through some proper techniques, like papier mache and charcoal drawing, and it gave me some ideas, and the sculpture one I did I guess taught me more about abstract art and how not all art has to be you know, drawing exactly what you can see, which was probably a good thing for me. As far as teaching art, probably another subject would have been good, you know like, to go into a few more specifics.

SB- Ok, so do you mean more about teaching it in the classroom?

LB- yeah like you know, I probably could have done with that opportunity to be shown how to teach children how to draw and do all of those sorts of things, cause like in the class I do ok, but like, you know when you those students who can't draw, I can't draw either, I have got no idea how to help them.

SB- Ok, next question is how are you developing your visual art knowledge now?

LB- I spend a lot of time looking on the internet for art lessons and things that I can follow and then I'll have a go myself so that I've got one to show them and often I'll make it at different stages so I can show them the different stages as I am teaching myself. And I'm trying to keep now, I've started a folder with things you know, a great one to do that everyone can achieve something, and I've kept a folder of all the ones I've done so I've always got ones to show them.

SB- that's a great idea. You said that, and you sort of just mentioned it then as well, when you teach visual art you teach it as a separate learning area?

LB- sometimes, a lot of the time I try to build it in, like we've just done for maths cause I've got grade 6's and one of the things in the gr 6 maths curriculum is all to do with shape and making 3D shapes and being able to draw nets, I use that as a bit of a double thing where they have to then create a sculpture out of shapes and put that into a, um we recently did a dairy Australia program called the great wall of dairy, so we incorporated that because we had to produce a piece of artwork and we incorporated that into maths because we made hexagonal prisms and then we used canvas to cover it and they had to do research to paint the canvases to go on it, I try to cross it together as much as I can.

SB- So, when you're doing activities like that, obviously they're linked to the maths curriculum, but are you also looking at the visual art curriculum?

LB- I have no idea what the visual art curriculum looks like

SB- Ok, and you've also said that you have been looking on the internet for ideas, so do think that it is easy to find ideas for what to teach for the visual arts?

LB- Yes, generally, it can take a bit of time, and it can take a bit of time for one that's got good instructions.

SB- also, those sort of activities that you do do, why do you think you do include that visual art component?

LB- personally I think it's really important for creativity in our children, that's probably why I do it.

SB- so you basically answered the next question which was you do consider it to be important, so that would be why. Ok, so do you enjoy teaching visual art in your classroom?

LB- I do, for lots of reasons, I like to see what they can produce cause it's always interesting once you open up something for them to see what they can do, I guess it challenges me too, but yeah I do enjoy it, as long as I feel confident, if I'm confident in what I'm doing, then I'm fine.

SB- yep, so are there particular areas or visual art that you do feel confident teaching?

LB- um, the definite area that I'm not is the actual drawing what you can see and teaching them how to do that, like I had a teacher the other year assist with some low literacy children and instead of her coming in and working with them, I worked with the low literacy children while she did something

else with them and I watched her take a lesson with the rest of them on how to draw your hand and they did amazing work, and I thought I can't do that, I don't know, like I didn't know how to teach them that, so that would be my big down fall, we don't do a lot of that sort of art.

SB- So, in your survey you said that you haven't taken part in any professional development since you started teaching.

LB- I know, I've never seen any to go to really.

SB- Ok, would you be interested in any if they were available?

LB- Yeah definitely

SB- And, you've mentioned that you don't feel so confident about drawing and things like that so is that something that you would like to get out of professional development or is there something else?

LB- Yeah something that, cause I can, for example we did some work on the 'Scream' and they reproduced their own Scream like I took photos of them in that pose and they layered it and did their background and they'd cut out what they had to draw themselves after the photo and layered it back on, you know, that's all very abstract and I can teach them all how to do that, but yeah the drawing thing I think would be what I'd be looking for to go to.

SB- Sure. You also said that you include visual art in your classroom around once a week is there a specific time when you would do this, like the maths and art activity you were talking about earlier?

LB- you know if it filters in to something else we are doing in the curriculum it can be at any time, but if it's just you know an art activity, and then I normally do it on the Monday afternoon.

SB- is there any reason for that?

LB- it fits in well with the timetable and Monday afternoon its straight from lunch to the end of the day so it's a solid block, I don't know really, it just fits.

SB- ok, at your school do you think that visual arts is valued as part of the curriculum?

LB- by some teachers, but not by all.

SB- so do you think that there might be some teachers that your school that avoid teaching it?

LB- definitely

SB- ok, and you mentioned in your survey that you had some support from the school, what does that look like?

LB- well I guess what I was talking to about before in that you know if you've got a teacher support that comes in and you can be a bit flexible, so I knew that that teacher had some good art skills so I used her to take art with my kids, like the type of art I couldn't do, we are pretty well resourced, we get to put in an art order every year, the librarians for book week will supply you with a bunch of art activities you can choose to do so all the instructions are there, so there's a fair few things in place, we've actually just had for the grade 6's a graffiti artist in, which was just amazing, and he worked with our gr 6 students to present a mural on the wall, so they went out and worked with him and made their own stencils, and yeah, so you know, there is that extra support for the things that we do.

SB- so, obviously your passionate about art and probably some other teachers at the school are as well...

LB- yep

SB- but, is there a particular grade or anything that you are noticing some teachers aren't passionate about visual art?

LB- I think at the moment the higher up you get in the grades because the curriculum becomes very content heavy a lot of teachers feel like they don't have enough time to do it anymore.

SB- so it's more of a pressure thing, and time management?

LB- yep

SB- so that leaves us with the last question, from that do you think that there's support from senior staff for teaching visual art?

LB- I don't know if there's an active push, I think it's just a by-product at the moment, you know teachers are trying to get their head around the curriculum, history was in this year, geography will be new next year so I think that's just taking over at the moment.

Luzette Interview 28 November 2013

SB- Ok so the first question is what role has visual art played in your life? So, did you do much when you were growing up or at primary school or anything like that?

LBr- I honestly can't remember doing anything at school, it was a long time ago, nothing stands out, and I don't even think, like I've got projects and stuff from school, but I've got no art, so probably not, no. I don't remember anything, I did, I remember doing something at uni, or at teachers college, a unit on art but that, but that was sort of my real first dabble in it I suppose.

SB- Did you like it when you got to do it?

LBr- yeah, but it's probably, I've never considered myself very good at art, but I really like teaching it and I like getting kids to think they're good at it, yeah so that's what I like about it.

SBr- I honestly don't think you have to be that skilled at it to teach it

LBr- and some people are skilled at it, but they're hopeless at getting kids to you know. It's like every learning area, you have to plan for it, and you have to introduce it and you have to show examples and you have to give them small steps, you can't just say go and do this because kids don't know how to blend colours and all those sorts of things.

SB- yeah, what about now, do you have anything to do with art, apart from when you're teaching it?

LBr- No, nothing

SB- when you went to uni you said that you completed some visual art training?

LBr- yep

SB-did you have to do that or did you choose to do it?

LBr- no it was a compulsory thing, but from what I can remember it wasn't a lot about teaching art, it was about, I can remember picking an artist and having a bit of a look at them, I can remember doing some screen printing and it was more me doing stuff than actually how to plan it and how to yeah. I remember doing some batik dyeing and all that sort of stuff! That was pretty trendy back then, it was more me fiddling in different sorts of areas of art and having a go at the potters wheel and stuff like that, rather than planning units and stuff like that.

SB- so what would you have preferred?

LBr- I think it was good for me to have a bit of a dabble in different things because then, I would know, it gave me a bit of an experience fiddling with clay, and dyeing and it sort of showed me lots of different things you can do in art, I think it was good, and it also, you know I wasn't very good at a lot of things, but I still had a go and I suppose that's important when you work with kids, that even though you might not think you're very good at it, have a go at it. I found now it's really hard, a lot of kids have those mental blockages that they aren't very good at art and it's really hard to get them to think that they can be and you that if you like it then its good! I think a lot of kids think art is drawing something so that it looks like it's real.

SB- that's something that I sort of wanted to talk to you a bit more about, when talking with kindergarten teachers they say that their kids are really free with their art, but then you're saying when they get to grade 6 that they often think they aren't good at it and it has to be real, so...

LBr- what's happening in between. And I've got kids who won't have a go, but it's good, when it's things that are really different like abstractly more things, they're a bit more willing to have a go. But when it's still life things you know "I can't do this, this doesn't look right" you know they really, so yeah, something must be happening between kinder and upper primary. And the kids sort of like, it's already determined who the good artists are, and they know they're not as good as them. I do lots of art, I probably do more than anyone at the primary school and its sort of um, I find that I'm not too prescriptive with what they've got to do, you sort of give them an idea and try and encourage them to go off and try different things.

SB- so when you do that do you have a specific material that they would be working with, like drawing or painting or something?

LBr- yeah, although sometimes we might do stuff, and they can put colour into it, and if they want to use paint they use paint and if they want to use pastels they use pastels, whatever. The kids some kids like that bit of freedom, and plus it's a bit safer for those kids who don't paint well. I find that an area that kids really still struggle with.

SB- so do you teach them techniques at all?

LBr- yeah, a bit, yeah, we sort of, I mean I haven't, I get ideas on lots of websites to get an idea of something, pinterest is sort of, and just think, we find something and think oh yeah how could we do this. I'm just trying to think of things we've done. When we looked at shading we looked at all the different shading techniques and practices and then had a go at sketching things and using some of those techniques and then we have done a bit of blending colours and stuff. It's really hit and miss we just do what we want to do really.

SB- so do you ever look at the curriculum?

LBr- no, no I don't honestly. No I don't. Should do, but I suppose it's just a progression thing where you sort of take kids further than they're already at, and that's what good about a primary school, cause you can start an art activity early in the week and they don't have to start it and finish it, and they don't have to wait until next week to go on with it, they can do a bit Tuesday, they can do a bit Wednesday.

SB- so you said that you include it several times a week so that would be what you would do?

LBr- yeah, we tend to, it's very rarely when we haven't got something on the go, you know there's often, I've just bought some little canvases and that's what they're doing for Christmas, so they had to come up with the design, something that they wanted and we've used watercolour paints, and they all did a fantastic job, and we've done a big mural with wax and dye, a big Australia mural, so we've done, we haven't done a lot of 3D stuff, clay work or papier mache, oh they've done some papier mache with the play they're doing- masks and stuff, but. Yeah.

SB- so when you talk about masks and stuff like that, you're integrating it into other subjects?

LBr- yeah

SB- do you do that with everything, so it's always linked to something else?

LBr- no, not always, often it is but not always, sometimes it can just be a technique and an art activity cause it looks good and you know, but a lot of the time it does, with our Australian history we did a few art things that fit in with that, and novels, they're really good to use for making some artwork too.

SB- There's another grade 6 class isn't there?

LBr- yeah

SB- would they do as much art as you do?

LBr- no, but the teacher is really good at art; he sort of doesn't do a lot of it with the kids though. But you know, it should be something that you have to give kids experiences in and you should be doing it every week it should be part of your program with everything else, cause it also caters for those kids that aren't strong in other areas, it gives them a chance to say this is my area it gives them a chance to really be good at it. And I've got a few like that, one struggles with literacy but art, he always does a great job and he's always happy and proud of it.

SB- ok, so you talked about pinterest, so you obviously find it quite easy to find ideas

LBr- yeah, I'm always on there, you can just look at the end product and then go from there, so we, look today we found these random red white and green horizontal striped of different thicknesses and then they had done a silhouette of a Christmas tree or an angel over the top, and they'd done them on boxes, on canvases and I just thought we could get pizza boxes and do that or you know and we talked about it together and someone said we could just use paper, there are so many things on there, so many ideas.

SB- so you've sort of talked about it already, but why do you include visual arts in your practice?

LBr- I think it gives kids a chance to, I don't know, it's just really calming and it's relaxing and they can sit and chat and it's a really nice time, and it gives those kids their chance to shine, and they can see, you most kids that I've got are really keen to do something that is the best they can do and its really good putting them up. And I've have some kids say to me, I've never had my artwork in the corridor! And I think my goodness you're in grade 6 and you've never had your artwork in the corridor! What's wrong! I still remember my sons blue pumpkin in prep! Everyone else had these nice orange pumpkins and his was blue!

SB- was it cool though?

LBr- yeah it really was! But it's yeah; kids like to see their work up.

SB- you said in your survey, and you've sort of talked about it already, that you think that it is very important, so why do you think visual art is so important?

LBr- because it's all about the different ways that kids learn and if we don't do art then we're chopping off that whole avenue that a lot of kids gain stuff through, you know you've got kids that can write well and kids that are mathematical and there's kids that are creative and if we don't give them opportunities then we're really doing them a disservice. And it's I mean we are doing a big play now, drama I must admit, we don't do much drama at all, and when we went up to the high school to do art, drama and music and the drama teacher did that bit of drama I thought how easy, why haven't I been doing that, and the kids just loved it, so I've done a few things since then, sort of made... you've just got to know what to do sometimes.

SB- now, do you actually enjoy teaching visual art?

LBr- yep, I love it, I just think it's, I suppose with so many other subjects, like maths for example, it's so you've got something you've got to do and you've got to get to the end point, and this is what you've got to do to get there, but with art it's, and you never know what they're going to come up with, that's what I love about it, sometimes you might find an activity and you think we'll try it and you don't know how they go and sometimes they, I can remember last year we did owls, we were doing, we read a book or something and they're visual arts they did on that was just amazing, I just really like it that sometimes you don't know what you're going to get out of it at the end of it. Kids never cease to surprise you do they! It's like with these water colours, I've got a little boy who his fine motor skills are just really poor, his handwriting is all over the place and he wanted to do these battle ships, these war ships and I had a look at it today and it's absolutely fabulous the colours he's used, the water and the sky and these little black ships and it's just, you know, and they all just look... and I think that's why I really like it cause it's just that element of surprise, but sometimes it works the other way too doesn't it! Sometimes you think, oh this will be really good! And it just flops, and you think, I won't do that again!

SB- yeah and sometimes something will work with one class but not with another

LBr- yep

SB- when you do your visual art, say you're working on a novel and you tell them they're going to for example create a drawing in relation to that would you do that at a particular time of day?

LBr- no, all different times, yeah, and that's the beauty of being a primary school teacher, it's not always an afternoon thing, it can be any time, and sometimes you might introduce something and do it first thing in the morning, so it's not really a set time. Just any time.

SB- do you think you spend enough time teaching visual art throughout the year?

LBr- yep, I mean when I look back at the end of the year and you see the piles of stuff that they've done you sort of think yeah we've done you know, a couple of years ago we did a calendar and the kids had to have 12 pieces of art, and they had heaps more than 12 and they could easily find 12 good pieces of art work that they liked. But I suppose it's the same, it's really frustrating when you find kids that don't finish stuff, and you sort of I just don't know how to overcome that, you go through the unfinished pile and you go oh he hasn't finished this or this or this, and there's always going to be that. And Yeah, we've got big art folders that they take home at the end of the year, and I suppose it's, some kids go through each piece with their parents and some just look at it you know.

SB-Yeah, ok. Now, you said that you have taken part in some visual art PD throughout the years...

LBr- yeah, mainly Zart Art

SB- recently?

LBr- I haven't this year, but I did last year, I sort of, our staff usually go to a couple of sessions from them a year, the christmas one before Christmas, and we often have a book week one too, so I always go to those.

SB- what do you think of them?

LBr- I think they're good, but I think they're really rushed and I think the ideas are fabulous, but you've got this bit of time and you've got four or five activities you've got to get through and you've just sort of got to go come on hurry up and get ready for the next one, so they're really rushed, and I think, I don't know that there is much art PD around, but it would be really good if there was.

SB- so what would you want to get out of it if there was more available?

LBr- I would like to have some ideas of techniques and stuff that I'm not really confident with, even clay, it's pretty basic, but I don't have a lot of skills to teach the kids, and at grade 6 it's a bit more than making an odd shaped thing, you know they're ready to make things. Another teacher and I did some a couple of years ago, she'd done a bit of clay before, so she took most of it and showed them a few techniques, and there's stuff like that an screen printing and stuff like that I steer away from a little cause it would be good to have a bit of those skills so that you could pass them on to kids. And with Zart Art, all their activities are based around the supplies they offer, so if you want to do it you've got to buy this and this and this from Zart Art.

SB- ok, there's only really one more thing to ask, do you think that visual arts is valued at your school?

LBr- in most classes I think it really is, yep, I could reel off a few teachers who wouldn't value it much because they don't do very much of it and I think they are doing they're kids a disservice and that's the thing, it has to be, you put it in and you have to do it, you need to be a bit more accountable I think, I can't just be you can do some if you want to, we need to be more accountable, I can't understand why they don't like it cause I think you know, it's great! I suppose you know sometimes you have to organise stuff that might, people might steer away from it you know, but I know in the early childhood they do lots of art down there. They love it! We work down in kinder, babysitting, so I just took my class down and they were doing these Christmas things and they were getting into it.

SB- also, do you think there is support from senior staff?

LBr- nup, not really, oh well I don't know if there's support, dunno, never really thought about it, I suppose they don't say anything to people who don't do it that it should be included, they don't very often say gee that's an awesome display you've got up there, that artwork is fantastic or anything like that. Dunno.

SB- do think that resources are ok?

LBr- well, our bloody storeroom is locked up with a lock and key and you're not allowed in. We've got a couple of teachers who hog a lot of stuff and it makes it really hard, I mean we've got plenty of paint, except this time of year when its, plenty of paper, and you can always go and ask if you want something in particular that's not there, if you want something in particular that's not there, they'll always get it for you, but see I spend a fair bit of my class budget on art stuff, we have a lot of good books with a lot of ideas in the library, we've got quite a few really good ones, and we have got supplies but you know sometimes people are a bit precious about them.